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JAI TELANGANA

JAI JAI TELANGANA!



VOTE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND WELFARE



TRS Party GHMC Elections Manifesto – 2020



FREE DRINKING WATER TO EVERY HOUSE

Upto 20,000 Litres tap water free for every house from December



DOUBLE BED ROOM HOUSES

One Lakh Double Bed Room Houses to fulfill the dreams of every poor Person

- Permanent solution for Drinking Water Issues



COMPREHENSIVE SEWAGE MASTER PLAN

Strategic Nalas Development programme for sewerage in SRDP Model Comprehensive Drainage Management through New STPs Management



COMPREHENSIVE GHMC ACT

The main aim of new Act is to provide Transparent Services to Public and enhance responsibility among officials

- Extending of Annapurna Meals @ Rs. 5/-



BEST PUBLIC TRANSPORT

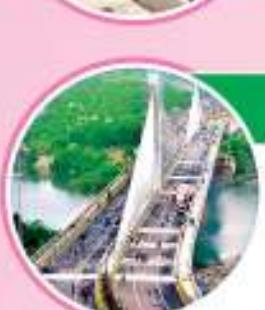
Expansion of public transport through Metro Train MMTS, BRTS



DEVELOPMENT ACROSS THE CITY

Expansion of IT and Industries All Around city. Construction of Townships along ORR

- Comprehensive plan for Modernization of Moosi



SOLUTION TO TRAFFIC WOES

Action towards permanent solution for traffic problems through SRDP, under passes, Flyovers, Link Roads



GREEN HYDERABAD

Development of More Parks, Theme Parks, Colony Parks etc, Creation of more urban lung spaces

- Development and Beautification of Tanks



SAFE CITY

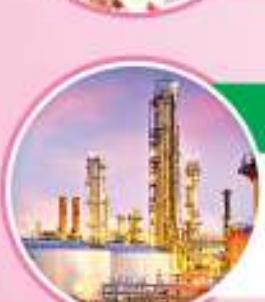
Vigil with additional 5 Lakh CC Cameras Police Command Control Center



RECYCLING SOLID WASTE

Action towards waste to wealth. 20 Megawatt waste to energy plants established already. Another 43 M.W. plants soon

- Special Training Centers for skill development among youth



ASSURANCE TO INDUSTRIES, BUSINESSMEN

Cancellation of minimum demand power charges to Industries Businessmen



FREE POWER TO BARBERS, WASHERMEN

Free power supply to Saloons, Dhobi Ghats in GHMC and throughout the State

- Assurance for Employment

- Continuous Quality Power

- Transport Motor Vehicle Tax Relief

- Best Public Health Facilities

- Support to Cinema Industry Tax Exemption

- Initiatives for IT Developments

Polling Date :
 1st December, 2020

We appeal you to vote for Car Symbol and Elect TRS Candidates



VOTE FOR CAR
 Telangana Rashtra Samithi, Greater Hyderabad

BJP poised to upset KCR's applecart in GHMC polls

TRS president K Chandrasekhar Rao, who has enjoyed an unchecked run thus far, appears all set to taste a bitter pill with the BJP poised to upset his applecart in the GHMC polls.

The BJP has launched a no-holds-barred attack on the TRS for its inefficiency in tackling the floods and widespread corruption. Going by the way he has targeted the BJP in a meeting at the LB Stadium, it seems KCR has accepted defeat even before the votes are cast.

In his speech, he never spoke against the Congress but lashed out at the BJP stating that the latter had brought a hordes of national leaders and that he was being targeted by the saffron brigade. With his utterances, KCR virtually agreed that the BJP is the main opposition

and the party's success in the GHMC polls is a foregone conclusion.

The recently concluded Bihar elections proved that people from Kashmir to Kanyakumari have accepted the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, thanks to his good governance and the BJP's ideology. The secret behind the BJP winning election after election is the fact that the fruits of governance are reaching the people. The opposition has lost the trust of the people while the Prime Minister has won their confidence with his developmental work

managed to lure scores of Congress MLAs and weaken the grand old party, thereby denting its prospects beyond repair.

KCR has so far been enjoying an unchecked run at power and there was no one questioning him. There are whispers that he has made money from construc-

tion of irrigation projects and it's an open knowledge that he has been keeping aloof from the people by confining himself to his farmhouse.

He has been acting like a dictator, trampling those who raise his voice against his anti-people policies and has even put curbs on the



Y SATYA KUMAR
BJP National Secretary

Chief Minister, who pays visits to console the bereaved families of leaders and film personalities, did not meet the people in flood-affected areas who were waiting for government help.

When scores of people died due to the Coronavirus pandemic due to lack of amenities at the Osmania and Gandhi hospitals, he failed to respond. KCR, who had come to power stating that he would give one lakh jobs, miserably failed to fulfil the promise. The leader who claims that his government is providing graft-free, people-friendly governance and maintaining law and order, should take back his statement as crime is on the rise across the State.

TRULY SPEAKING

The Chief Minister should release a white paper on development during his six-year rule. KCR, who attributed his party's victory in the previous GHMC polls to himself and KT Rama Rao, should realise why citizens now prefer the BJP over the TRS.

People voted for the TRS in previous polls assuming that KTR would transform Hyderabad into a global city but their hopes were dashed as it is dotted with potholes, overflowing sewage and frequent traffic snarls. Lack of basic amenities is the order of the day.

In a heart-rending incident, a woman who came to apply for compensation to the people residing in floodhit areas breathed her last at a Mee Seva. In this backdrop, the BJP is being seen as an oasis in the desert as the people are waiting for an alternative, which they can rely upon for good governance and corruption-free administration.

Not only people of Hyderabad, but also the entire Telangana is waiting for a right opportunity to teach a befitting lesson to the government.

KCR in his speech stated that the people should live in harmony like flowers in a bouquet, but people across the country have been living peacefully, irrespective of caste, creed or religion. Thirty percent Muslims in Lucknow, Meerut and Bhopal, 14 percent in Bengaluru and 22 percent in Mumbai are living in peace. Leaders who chanted secularism have been rejected by the people and KCR too will join their bandwagon soon.

Temples aglow on Karthika Pournami

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A large number of devotees on Tuesday participated in special pooja programmes held at the temples across the state on the occasion of Karthika pournami. Women thronged the temples since the early hours of the day and lit the earthen lamps (Karthika Deepams) on the premises of the temples, which were filled with a spiritual and festive atmosphere.

In Nalgonda district, thousands of devotees thronged Wadapally, which is the confluence of rivers Krishna and Musi for a holy dip and participated in pooja programmes held in Sri Ageshwarihswara Swamy temple. The ancient temples Chaya Someshwarayam and Pachala Someshwarayam at Panagal also witnessed a huge rush of devotees. Women released lamps in the temple's pond on the occasion of Karthikapournami. Special pooja programmes were per-



formed in Erakeswara temple at Pillalamarri in Suryapet district on an auspicious day. In Yadadri-Bhongir district, Yadadri Sri Lakshminarayana Swamy temple also witnessed a huge rush of devotees on the day.

TRS MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha on Monday offered prayers at the Shivalayam here along with her family members on the occasion of the auspicious Karthikapournami. Special pooja programmes were per-

formed in Erakeswara temple at Pillalamarri in Suryapet district on an auspicious day. In Yadadri-Bhongir district, Yadadri Sri Lakshminarayana Swamy temple also witnessed a huge rush of devotees on the day. "Offered prayers on the occasion of #KartikaPournami. May Lord Shiva's divinity protect and guide us on the right path always. Om Namah Shivaya!" Kavitha tweeted. She was also accorded a traditional wel-

come by the members of the temple committee while the priests performed 'Abhishekam' and 'Archana'. Kavitha said that she prayed for the peace and prosperity of the people.

In Karimnagar district, scores of devotees thronged the temples on the occasion of Karthika Pournami. About 50,000 pilgrims thronged Vemulawada Rajarajeshwara Swamy shrine. All queue lines were filled with devotees since morning. Pilgrims performed special pujas by having the darshan of the residing deity. District Collector D Krishna Bhaskar visited the shrine and performed Deepadanam. Sircilla RDO Srinivas Rao along with family members performed pujas in the shrine. Temple authorities performed 'satyanarayana vratham' in two shifts for the convenience of devotees. While mahanyasa-purvaka ekadasha rudrabishekam was performed in the morning, Jwalathoranam

and Mahapujas were performed in the evening.

On the other hand, Dharmapuri Laxminarayana Swamy temple also witnessed huge devotees. Besides Telugu states, devotees from adjacent Maharashtra have begun visiting the shrine since 4 am in the morning. After taking a hold bath in the river Godavari, pilgrims released deepams into the waters.

Meanwhile, devotees throng Pushkar Ghats at Alampur Kshetra in Jagulambad-Gadwal district. According to officials, over 38,000 devotees performed holy dip on Monday.

Tight security measures have been put in place near Pushkar Ghats to prevent any untoward incidents. Also, thousands of people from Kurnool are visiting Alampur despite the AP state government arranging 23 pushkar ghats in the district, including at Kurnool city and Mantralayam.

Supply of vegetables...

Continued from Page 3

reduced. Normally 40-45 trucks of peas from Punjab's Amritsar-Hoshiarpur belt would arrive on a given day in winters but it has reduced to 15-20 trucks now, he said.

"The rates have gone up due to reduced supply and hike in transport charges that have increased by around Rs 10,000 per truck," he said.

The trucks from Punjab carrying fruits and vegetables that would normally take around 9-10 hours for a trip to Delhi, now takes 12-14 hours due to closure of Singh border, said another wholesaler.

The reduced supply has also pushed retail rates in the markets of the city. The rates of potatoes, tomatoes and onion that were already high, have relatively been less affected, said the wholesalers. "The major supply of potatoes and onions to Delhi are from states like Maharashtra, Karnataka and MP and the routes to these states are not affected by the farmers' strike."

Two held for theft from ATM at Mansoorabad

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a joint operation Central Crime Station (CCS) cops along with Vanasthalipuram Police on Monday nabbed two persons who were involved in ATM theft at Mansoorabad and made away with Rs 30 lakh cash on November 15.

The two accused were identified as Mohammad Amir, 22, hailing from Uttar Pradesh and Mohammed Afridi, 19, a resident of Hyderabad. The main accused along with his associates was still at large.

Explaining the modus operandi, Sunpreet Singh, DCP LB Nagar Zone said, "The accused, who had knowledge about ATM mechanism and alarm system used to conduct reccie to identify the isolated ATMs. Once they select the target they barge into ATM and spray black paint on the CCTV cameras to conceal their identity and cut the ATM machines front portion with gas cutter without touching its wires and commit theft."

Investment fraud busted

Continued from Page 3

The accused also assured a 10 percent referral commission to those who got news investors to join the scheme." He that the accused had meticulously planned the fraud to gain the confidence of the investors they named the website as Stemcor Maxhedge, displayed the pictures of foreigners as directors and team members,

used two virtual UK numbers for communicating with customers, showed the address of the company as "Sobell Leisure Centre, Hornsey Road, London N7 7NY, United Kingdom".

Three held with 76 kgs of ganja

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The city police busted an inter-state ganja smuggling racket and arrested three drug peddlers on Monday.

Police officials seized one car, one motorcycle, Rs 3,000 cash, 4 mobile phones, all worth Rs 16.8 lakhs from their possession.

On credible information, the sleuths of Special Operations Team (SOT), LB Nagar Zone along with Sarooranagar Police arrested Sanjeev Kabiraj, 21, of Visakhapatnam district and a native of Odisha, Dhakikonda Venkanna Swamy, 26, of Machilipatnam of Krishna district and lanekar Madhan, 27, of Quthbullahpur, Medchal district near Kothapet X road under Saroor Nagar Police Station limits when they were transporting the contraband from the Sileru agency area of Visakhapatnam district, Andhra Pradesh to Hyderabad.

The arrested persons, the police raided a residence in Manikonda and arrested the other accused.

Investigation revealed that such the main accused Mozman Mondal earned huge amount of Rs 8 lakh by supplying sex workers in one year. Two years ago he came to Hyderabad and rented a flat at Manikonda. He used to supply women to customers by collecting an amount of Rs 6,000- 8,000 through PhonePay or GooglePay and used to give Rs 2,000-3,000 to the victims, said police.

All the arrested persons were sent to judicial custody and further investigation is underway.

Police bust prostitution racket, rescue 7 victims

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a decoy operation, the anti-human trafficking unit of Rachakonda Police busted a prostitution racket and rescued seven victims including two Bangladeshi women.

The accused were identified as Mozman Mondal, Liton Sarkar, Abir Shaik, Muntaz Ali Mondal, Sana Khan, Qamar Unisa and Mohd Parvez Khan.

According to the Rachakonda Police Commissioner Mahesh M Bhagwat, the officials arrested Sana Khan, Qamar Unisa and Parvez Khan and rescued five victims. Based on the confession from

Outcome of GHMC polls set to alter TS political...

Continued from Page 3

The elections witnessed a high-decibel campaigning, resembling that of Assembly or Parliamentary elections, particularly with BJP's top national leaders participating in the electioneering.

The polling would begin at 7 AM and come to an end at 6 PM. The total number of contesting candidates is 1,122. The TRS has fielded 150 candidates for all the 150 wards, while the BJP has fielded 149 candidates, Congress 146, TDP 106, AIMIM 51, CPI 17 and CPM 12 candidates. Besides, there are 415 Independents and 76 candidates fielded by parties from other states and registered parties. The Telangana State Election Commission (SEC) has made elaborate arrangements for the balloting process

including the prized Nizamabad Lok Sabha seat, where Kalvankunta Kavitha, daughter of Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao (KCR), suffered a humiliating defeat. More recently, the BJP edged past the TRS in the Dubbli Assembly by-elections, sending the TRS on the back foot. The pink party, while trying its best to distance from its once friendly party MIM, has accused the BJP of playing communal politics.

The BJP has strategically used the popularity of the AIMIM in the Old City to consolidate Hindu votes in these elections -- a strategy it is fine-tuning for the 2023 Assembly polls. The AIMIM and TRS have had a tactical understanding in previous elections, though they have not been formal allies. This time it is a different ball game.

The TRS has struggled a lot

to turn the campaign spotlight away from a heated Hindu-Muslim narrative in the wake of the BJP's aggressive onslaught. The BJP accused the TRS of supporting the AIMIM's minority agenda. This polarising rhetoric has put the TRS on the back foot. The pink party, while trying its best to distance from its once friendly party MIM, has accused the BJP of playing communal politics.

The BJP's high-pitched campaign for the Hyderabad local body elections reflects in many ways the saffron brigade's template for electoral politics under the leadership of Amit Shah and Narendra Modi. As per this template, every election, no matter how local, is an opportunity for BJP to expand its footprint and enter newer territories.

Moderna claims 100% effective...

Continued from Page 3

American pharmaceutical Pfizer and Germany's BioNTech applied for similar approvals last week, and their vaccine could be greenlit in the US shortly after December 10. The Moderna vaccine, which was co-developed with the US National Institutes of Health, is being studied in a clinical trial with more than 30,000 participants across the United States. An interim analysis announced earlier this month was based on 95 patients who fell sick with Covid-19.

The final analysis was based on 196 cases, 185 of which were observed in a group assigned a placebo versus 11 who received the shots. Thirty people had severe cases -- all of whom were in the placebo group -- which also included one person who died.

Netas on temple-run ahead of...

Continued from Page 3

Incidentally, TRS working president KT Rama Rao had questioned Bandi Sanjay as to why the BJP chose to focus on the Bhagyalakshmi temple and not the Balkampet temple or Birla Mandir or Tadbund temple. Bandi Sanjay said, "It's my second visit to Ujjaini Mahakali temple. The deity is powerful. Hinduism is not against anyone, but unfortunately, Hindus are belittled, neglected and divided all the time. I appeal to people not to get divided on the basis of caste as society and Hindu Dharma is paramount. I prayed that every Hindu should be able to lift his or her head high and live respectfully. Hindus are facing a lot of difficulties and I offered prayers to remove such obstacles and make them strong."

He urged people to cast their vote on Tuesday and not to fall prey to propaganda or the lure

of money. At the BJP state office, Satyanarayana Swamy Vratam, Sri Rama and Ganapati Homam and Rudra Chandi Homam were held. Minister of State for Home Affairs G Kishan Reddy, who participated, said that he prayed for the well-being and bright future of the people.

MLC Kavitha, who was trolled by the BJP for taking blessings from pastors during the campaign, early on Monday offered prayers on the occasion of Kartika Pournami. She said that she had prayed that Lord Shiva's divinity would protect and guide us on the right path always. Even during her campaign in Gadhimaj, Kavitha had visited the famous Lakshmi Ganapathi temple.

It may be mentioned here that instead of the development agenda, issues that have hijacked the election campaign are worship in temples and masjids, Hindus and

IMD predicts a warmer than...

Continued from Page 3

The Bombay High Court had initially directed the ITT to consider Batra's petition, after he approached it earlier this month, as representation and pass appropriate orders. Batra, who had secured All India Rank (AIR) of 270 in IIT Advanced exams and secured admission, claimed in his plea that he had clicked the wrong link which was meant to withdraw his seat. Batra intended to freeze the seat, the plea said. On November 23, a division bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice G S Kulkarni dismissed Batra's petition noting that ITT had considered his representation and passed its order. In his petition to the supreme court, Batra has sought a direction to the IIT to consider his case on humanitarian grounds, and requested creation of an additional seat to undo his loss.

It may be mentioned here that instead of the development agenda, issues that have hijacked the election campaign are worship in temples and masjids, Hindus and

Sangareddy districts. The maximum temperatures are expected to be in the range of 29°C to 32°C, while the minimum temperatures are to be in the range of 16°C to 20°C.

This prediction is valid till December 4, the TSDPS said.

BJP protests...

Continued from Page 3

He alleged that the police was also not taken action against TRS leaders threatening and attacking BJP cadres. He claimed that Rajendernagar MLA attacked workers but police failed to take action against him. The BJP leaders said TRS was resorting to unfair means to win the elections. They said party's Medchal Urban district president Harish Reddy was attacked by the police when he tried to stop distribution of money among voters.

Dressed/With Skin ₹184
Without Skin ₹210
Broiler at Farm ₹127

EGG RATES ₹/kg

HYDERABAD 434
VIJAYAWADA 444
VISAKHAPATNAM 435
RETAIL PRICE ₹4.34 (IN HYDERABAD)

CHICKEN RATES ₹/kg

Dressed/With Skin ₹184
Without Skin ₹210
Broiler at Farm ₹127

GOLD ₹ 48,760 (10 gm)

₹ 330
SILVER ₹ 63,300 (1kg)

₹ 1400

ANALYSIS 7PLUG
THE LEAKS**MONEY 8**PENALTY WAIVED FOR NON-COMPLIANCE WITH
QR CODE PROVISIONS FOR B2C TRANSACTIONS**PAGE 12**LIQUOR SALES ZOOM,
THANKS TO GHMC POLLS

HYDERABAD, TUESDAY DECEMBER 1, 2020; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

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**Gadkari confident
India will get
Corona vax as
'early as possible'****8****FARMERS'
PROTEST IMPACT:****Supply of
vegetables,
fruits impacted**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

**Beware of BJP's
'fake news': Harish****4****BJP poised to upset
KCR's applecart in
GHMC polls****2****TODAY****ALMANAC**Month & Paksham:
Kartik & Krishna Paksha
Panchangam

Tithi: Pratipada: 04:51 pm

Nakshatram: Rohini 08:31 am

Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start
any important work)

Rahukalam: 02:50 pm - 04:13 pm

Yamagandam: 09:19 am - 10:42 pm

Varijam: 02:36 pm - 04:21 pm

Gulika: 12:05 pm - 01:28 pm

Good Time: (to start any important work)

Amritakalam: 01:03 am - 02:48 am

Abhijit Muhrtham: 11:43 am - 12:27 pm

**HYDERABAD
WEATHER**Forecast: Mostly sunny
Temp: 28/16
Humidity: 65%
Sunrise: 06:30 am
Sunset: 05:40 pm
Current Weather Conditions
Updated November 30, 2020 5:00 PM

Outcome of GHMC polls set to alter TS political landscape

L VENKAT RAM REDDY
■ HYDERABAD

Polling for the crucial Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation elections will be held on Tuesday. The outcome of this election is expected to alter the political landscape of Telangana and set the stage for the 2023 December Assembly polls. Although TRS, BJP, Congress, TDP, AIMIM and Left parties are in the fray, ground reports suggest that the real fight is mainly among the

- TRS, BJP, AIMIM, Congress, TDP, Left parties in fray
- Main contenders for Balida: TRS, BJP and AIMIM
- Over 74 lakh voters to exercise franchise in 150 wards
- Polling from 7 am to 6 pm; results on Dec 4
- TRS aiming for 'century', BJP hopeful of replicating 'Dubbak result'

TRS, BJP and the AIMIM.

As many as 74,44,260 voters

are expected to exercise their franchise, using ballot papers, to elect their representatives in the 150-ward GHMC.

The TRS, which won 99 seats out of 150 in the 2016 GHMC polls, is aiming at a century this time. The BJP is leaving no stone unturned to yet another blow to TRS and is keen on replicating the result of the Dubbak Assembly bypoll, in which it trounced TRS in Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao's home turf against all expectations.



Despite La Nina conditions, this winter would remain bearable in Telangana, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD). This is in marked contrast to the sharp dip in the mercury over the weekend that forced citizens to rummage through their cupboards and dig out the woolens.

As per IMD, temperatures during the upcoming winter season -- from December to February -- will remain above normal minimum across Telangana. However, North India is likely to witness harsher winters than peninsular India.

As per the IMD, "Telangana is very likely to experience minimum temperatures to be slightly above normal (probability of 40%).

Telangana is very likely to experience maximum temperatures to be slightly below normal (probability of 45 percent to 50 percent)."



TS BJP unit chief Bandi Sanjay and TRS MLC Kalyankunta Kavitha offering prayers on the occasion of Karthika Pournami on Monday

Student loses IIT seat due to 'wrong' click

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A 18-year-old student has lost his seat for a four-year electrical engineering course in the prestigious IIT Bombay after he "inadvertently" clicked on a "wrong" link which was meant to withdraw from the process.

The student, Siddhant Batra who hails from Agra,

witnessed at places of worship, trying to connect with God.

For instance, Rajya Sabha Member and BJP national general secretary Bhupender Yadav, who is the GHMC poll in-charge, offered prayers at the Lord Balaji temple at Tirumala.

After focussing on Bhagyalakshmi temple throughout the campaign, BJP Telangana president Bandi Sanjay visited the Yellamma temple at Balkampet and Ujjaini Mahakali temple in Secunderabad.

Having done the hard work of wooing citizens over the last fortnight, leaders of all political hues on Monday turned to wooing the Almighty and were seen praying fervently to God to sway the votaries in their favour.

Devotees flocked to Shiva temples to offer prayers on occasion of Karthika Pournami, and leaders too were seen doing a temple run ahead of polling day in the GHMC. After a heated campaign, several leaders were

seen offering prayers at the Lord Balaji temple at Tirumala.

After focussing on Bhagyalakshmi temple throughout the campaign, BJP Telangana president Bandi Sanjay visited the Yellamma temple at Balkampet and Ujjaini Mahakali temple in Secunderabad.

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IMD predicts a warmer than expected winter

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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Netas on temple-run ahead of polling day

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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GREATER HYDERABAD DECISION -2020

Beware of BJP's 'fake news': Harish

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Finance Minister T Harish Rao has cautioned people about fake news being peddled by a 'frustrated' Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leadership, just before the GHMC election. Speaking to the media here on Monday, Harish Rao said he had reliable information about the BJP trying to use the 'Breaking News' visuals of different TV channels to propagate that some TRS leaders were going to join the BJP.

He recalled that during the by-elections to Durbak also, the BJP had circulated a fake news about Congress candidate Cheruku Srinivas Reddy joining the TRS on the day of polling leading to confusion among voters in Durbak. "They are hatching a similar plan in GHMC elections also," he charged.

He said the BJP was making all possible attempts to lure the voters of Hyderabad. As the positive results in their favour looked impossible even after days of rigorous election campaign, the BJP leadership was now planning to circulate false information about TRS leaders. Claiming that he had credible information on this, Harish cautioned that the BJP



Finance Minister Harish Rao said the BJP was making all possible attempts to lure the voters of Hyderabad ahead of GHMC elections

would not even hesitate to use caste and religion. He appealed to the people not to believe in such messages and teach a lesson to such people by using

their vote as a weapon. He said that the BJP was planning to circulate some old videos to create communal tension in a last minute bid to lure voters. Stating that they have invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to BJP national president JP Nadda to impress upon voters, the Minister said they did not get the desired response. The Minister further termed that the BJP workers' protest in front of State Election Commission on Monday as a drama. Medak MP Kotha Prabhakar Reddy, Patancheru MLA Gudem Mahipal Reddy, TRS leaders Chinthu Prabhakar, Satyanarayana and others were present.

Bandi Sanjay prays for BJP's victory

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana BJP chief Bandi Sanjay Kumar on Monday visited Mahankali Ammavaru temple in Secunderabad and Balkampet Yellamma temple. He performed special pujas and prayed for BJP's victory in the GHMC elections. Speaking to the media, Bandi Sanjay said that Mahankali temple was a holy temple and had celestial power and glory. He said that everyone had to come out of a selfish feeling of 'me and my family' and had to think for the betterment of society. Bandi said that the Hindus were being subjected to negligence in the society.

"I prayed to Ammavaru to ensure that there would not be any division in the Hindu society and it must be in a good position," he said. He urged the people to utilise their voting right to establish their right of being an Indian. He asked people not to succumb to any sort of temptations and utilise their voting right in a free and fair manner.

Later, Bandi travelled by Metro Rail from Erragadda station to Nampally station along with party official spokesperson Rakesh Reddy and other party leaders. Later, Bandi Sanjay participated in Ganapathi homam held at



Later, Bandi travelled by Metro from Erragadda to Nampally along with party leaders and cadre

the state BJP office, along with Union Minister of State for Home Affairs G Kishan Reddy, state general secretary Mantri Srinivasulu, BJP Mahila Morcha state president Geetha Murthi and others.

Nizam scion takes objections to Shah's remark

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A day after Union Home Minister Amit Shah stated that BJP wants to free Hyderabad from the 'Nizam culture', the seventh and last ruling Nizam Mir Osman Ali Khan's grandson Nawaf Najaf Ali Khan said that politicians cannot change the 'Ganga Jamuni Tehzeeb' which has been a part of the culture of Hyderabad for centuries.

He said it was unfortunate that some political parties were trying to tarnish the image of the last ruler of erstwhile Hyderabad state while campaigning for the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) elections. Najaf Ali Khan, who is also President of the Nizam Family Welfare Association, said whenever elections are



It is unfortunate that some political parties were trying to tarnish the image of the last ruler of erstwhile Hyderabad state while campaigning for the GHMC elections, said Nawaf Najaf Ali Khan

held, his grandfather is criticized and his immense services towards his subjects are blatantly disregarded. "The politicians should attract the voters with their welfare schemes and by working for the people rather than spewing unnecessary negative narrative on Nizam VII," he said.

Sajjanar talks tough on rumour mongers

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Cyberabad Police Commissioner VC Sajjanar on Monday said 13,500 police personnel were deployed for the smooth conduct of the GHMC elections in 38 divisions falling under 19 police stations of the Cyberabad Police. Speaking at a press meet, Sajjanar said around 20.5 lakh voters were expected to exercise their franchise in 2,569 polling stations covering 674 polling locations in Cyberabad on Tuesday. "We have conducted meetings with all political parties and sensitised them about the Model Code of Conduct. Zone-wise sensitisation meetings covering all ranks of police officers were also conducted," Sajjanar said.

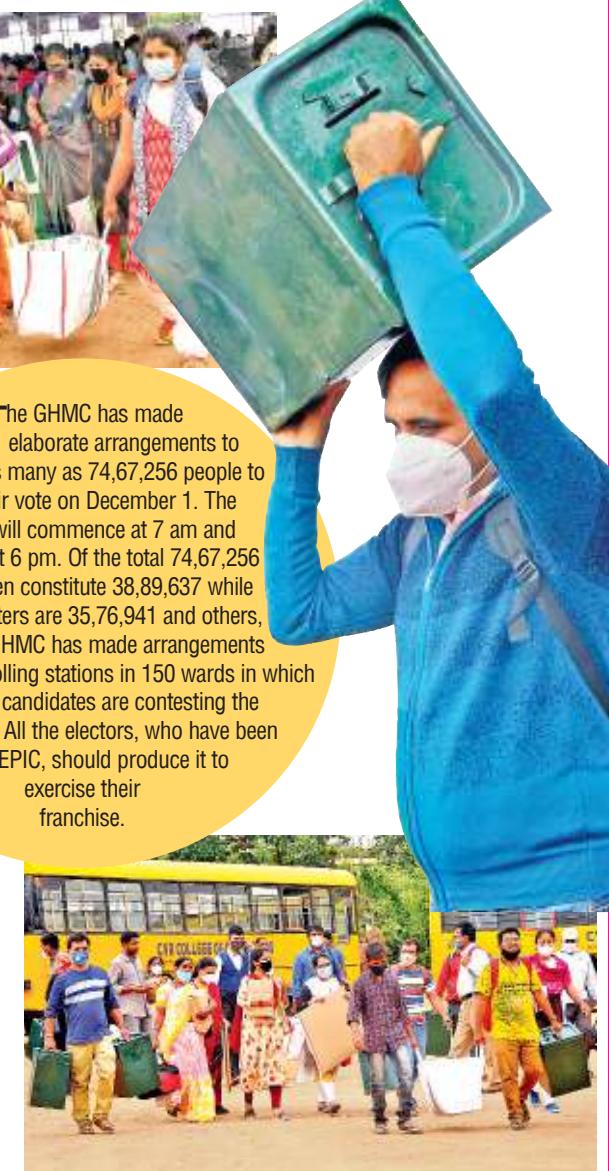
An ACP rank officer is designated to each GHMC circle as Nodal Officer for coordinating with election authorities, he said, adding that regular vehicle checking was organised at check posts set up at 15 places to check flow of money and liquor, while flag marches and area domination exercises were also being done. Cops are using IT applications and geo-tagging polling locations.



GET SET TO VOTE!



The GHMC has made elaborate arrangements to facilitate as many as 74,67,256 people to cast their vote on December 1. The polling will commence at 7 am and conclude at 6 pm. Of the total 74,67,256 voters, men constitute 38,89,637 while women voters are 35,76,941 and others, 678. The GHMC has made arrangements at 9,101 polling stations in 150 wards in which 1,122 candidates are contesting the elections. All the electors, who have been issued EPIC, should produce it to exercise their franchise.



GET SET TO VOTE!

Duplicate names in list a concern

NAMRATA SRIVASTAVA
■ HYDERABAD

During every election in the country, duplication of voter's name in the list has always created issues. However, the voter lists for GHMC elections have several issues that the voters have reported. One common problem that many are speaking about is the names of voters in some of the lists have been repeated not twice, but four times.

Dr Lubna Sarwath, an independent candidate standing from Asifnagar, alleged fraud in the voter list. In a video going viral, Lubna shares, "The list of my area has duplicates, triplicates and quadruples. I demand de novo process and fresh enumeration of voter list. The election should be postponed and fresh voter list should be prepared and prompt elections to Asifnagar be conducted as entailed in democratic process."

Confirming the same, a social activist from Amberpet, shares, "The residents of my area just finished the scrutiny of the voter list of our area. There are several names that are repeated twice, some even thrice. The Election Commission should have taken a little more time to organise the elections. In a hurry, they have messed up the list. Now all is on the shoulders of the officials at each booth."

One more problem that many have tweeted about is that their name is in voter lists of other areas. Raising his concern, Srinivas Kodali, shared on Twitter, "I found my name in Kondapur 104 ward's voter list. But I don't live there. My address, name and EPIC ID is



There are several names that are repeated twice, some even thrice. The EC should have taken a little more time to organise the elections. In a hurry, they have messed up the list, said a social activist

Corporator of Ahmednagar, says, "Soon after the elections were announced many people re-applied and that is why their name appears twice or thrice. I don't suspect any malice or foul play here. I am sure the voters will face no issues while the voting is going on."

One more problem that many have tweeted about is that their name is in voter lists of other areas. Raising his concern, Srinivas Kodali, shared on Twitter, "I found my name in Kondapur 104 ward's voter list. But I don't live there. My address, name and EPIC ID is

correct and belongs to a different ward, but I have to vote in a different ward? Yet another tactic to confuse voters?"

While another user, Srinivas Manooru, tweeted, "The most important point to be noted by booth level workers is to ensure each voter they contact, should know where their vote is registered. Many people are complaining their vote has been changed to different location, ward, division."

With so many issues and confusion, it remains to be seen how well the elections are conducted in each booth.

'TRS, cops and SEC murdering democracy'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

AICC Spokesperson Dr Sravan Dasoju on Monday alleged that the State Election Commissioner (SEC) is conducting GHMC elections in a most fraudulent way by violating every rule of the Constitution. "SEC is simply acting like a slave of KCR and following the instructions of his king. The SEC and the Police Department have colluded with the ruling TRS party and openly murdered democracy. Police force has become a muted spectator while huge money is being distributed to the voters in the GHMC limits by the TRS leaders," he alleged.

"Like a locust gang, the TRS cadres have started distributing money to voters in an organised crime format and that too in the presence of police. With the support of looted money from flood relief funds, the TRS party leaders have been distributing Rs 5,000 per vote in the GHMC area from the last 24 hours. They first cut power supply in a street and distribute money and go away like thieves," he explained.

Sravan Dasoju, along with former Congress Party MP Madhu Yashki Goud addressed the media at Gandhi Bhavan on Monday. "Ever since the announce-



ment of the GHMC elections, the SEC has not been following any rules as per the Constitution. He dumped every section in the dust bin and simply followed the instructions of KCR to conduct the elections. Instead of conducting them fraudulently, you can simply cancel the elections and auction the wards. As desired by you, then you can announce that only TRS and MIM Candidates won the elections. Why are you making dramas, shame on you," Sravan Dasoju.

"We were wondering why Naxalites used to boycott the elections by terming them fake and dubious. As the strong believers in democracy, we thought that they should have faith in democracy. But, going by the current circumstances and the whole process is being followed in GHMC elections, we are now thinking that they might be right," he added.

TikTok videos of candidates surface

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

As the time for campaign has ended, social media is now bustling with videos of contesting candidates. A video of TRS candidate from Vengal Nagar division 99 Dedipra Rao was being circulated on social media. In the video the candidate is enacting a popular Telugu song. In another video, Chaitanya Prasad's gambling with cards surfaced. Last moment videos and pictures, on social media do create an impact on voters. All the key political parties have roped in social media teams to promote themselves on Monday.

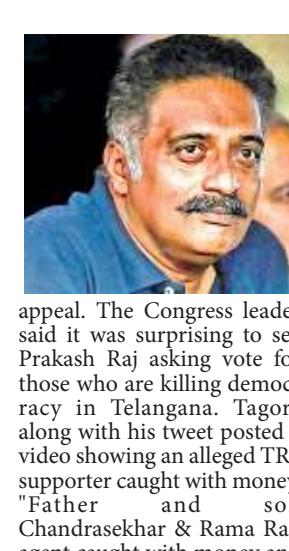


Last minute social media training was also conducted on Sunday by parties to help push the content. A social media coordinator on condition of anonymity said, "It is normal to get content related to opponents now. While pushing why our candidate is good, we also need to tell why the other person is not as the battle this time has changed. One day prior to voting and afternoon of polling day are crucial to influence voters. We share positive traits of our candidate and party related content, and also one or two about why other party candidate or party shouldn't win".

Actor-politician Prakash Raj backs TRS in GHMC polls

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Actor-turned-politician Prakash Raj has declared his support for TRS in elections to Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation. He appealed to people of Hyderabad to vote for harmony and not divisive politics. "Dear Hyderabadi, your power your right, and your conscience to decide. Do you want peaceful Hyderabad? #GHMC Elections... please vote for harmony, not divisive politics. I stand with #TRS, #KCR #KTR," he tweeted.



Prakash Raj drew flak from All India Congress Committee in charge for Telangana Manikram Tagore for his

pamphlets. Still you want them to win the elections," the Congress leader asked Prakash Raj.

In an interview to a Telugu channel, Prakash Raj criticised Pawan Kalyan for repeatedly changing his stand on BJP. The Janasena chief had announced that his party will contest GHMC elections but later on a request by BJP leaders, decided not to field the candidates and appealed to people to vote for the BJP.

Pawan Kalyan, however, did not campaign for BJP. Prakash Raj recalled that Pawan Kalyan supported the BJP in 2014 but later distanced himself from the party by accusing it of betrayal.

'New farm laws bigger threat than Covid'

PNS ■ SONIPAT (HARYANA)

Amid fears that the "Delhi Chalo" protests by farmers will lead to coronavirus spreading faster, their leaders said the "black laws" enacted at the Centre are a bigger threat than the contagion.

There had been few signs of social distancing as thousands of farmers from Punjab and Haryana began their protest last week against the three new agro-marketing laws, setting off on a march to the national capital.

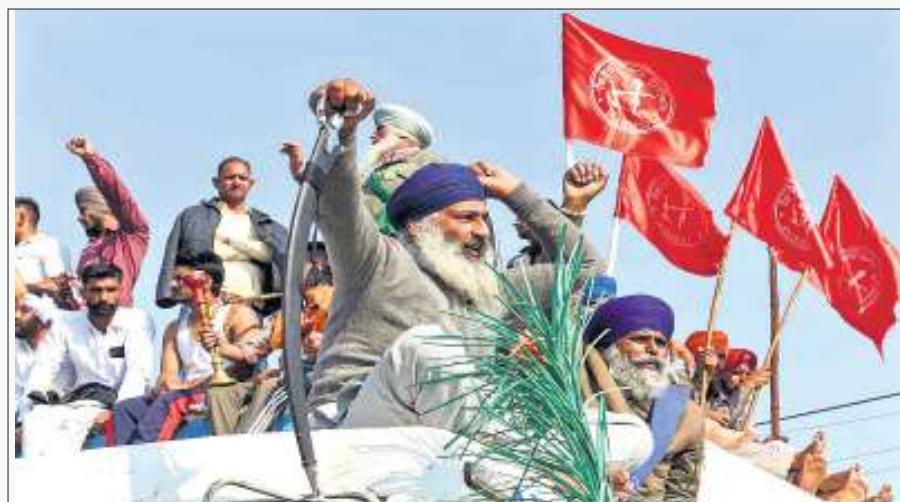
On the way, they skirmished with police at barricades and since Friday are massed at Delhi's entry points, many of them sheltering inside tractor-trolleys.

Masks appear to be a rarity and there is little attempt at keeping distance from each other, safeguards meant to prevent the infection from spreading.

But as experts fear that the event could become a coronavirus "superspreader", farm leaders say there are more pressing concerns before them.

"The new farm laws brought by the (Narendra) Modi government are a bigger threat than coronavirus as farmers fear they will lose their livelihood with the implementation of these laws," Bhartiya Kisan Union (Ekta Ugrahan) president Joginder Singh Ugrahan told PTI over the phone.

Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee general secretary Sarwan Singh Pandher asked why coronavirus posed a serious threat to life only during the farmers' agitation, and not during the recent Bihar assembly polls. "When Bihar elections took place, where was COVID-19? When any political gathering takes place, where is coronavirus?" he asked, in an apparent reference to the elec-



BJP's 'Khalistani-Maoist' charge, attack on Kejriwal

New Delhi: As the ruling BJP confronts a massive protest by farmers who have threatened to block Delhi and sit in on the highway in their agitation against new farm bills, a 'Khalistan and Maoist' link has been alleged by the party's social media chief.

Amit Malviya, the head of the BJP's IT cell, accused the Arvind Kejriwal government in Delhi of first notifying the central farm laws and then seizing the opportunity "burn down Delhi" as "Khalistanis and Maoists" had stepped in to oppose them. Mr Kejriwal's Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) hit back, saying the BJP was "hopelessly trying to divert the attention" of people as it was

clueless about handling the protests.

"Arvind Kejriwal led Delhi government has already notified the new Farm Laws on 23 November 2020 and had started implementing them.

But now that the Khalistanis and Maoists have stepped in to oppose, he sees an opportunity to burn down Delhi. It was never about farmers. Just politics..." tweeted Mr Malviya, who was recently also made in-charge of the BJP in Bengal.

In response, AAP said in a statement: "The notification by the Delhi government allows

Amarinder Singh, saying he will be responsible if the gathering of farmers worsens the coronavirus situation. Singh has backed the protest.

A spokesperson for the BJK's Haryana unit led by Gurnam Singh Charuni on Monday claimed that farmers are trying their best to keep COVID-19 at bay.

"As much as we can, we are trying to follow the guidelines. But at the moment thousands of farmers are saying that getting the Centre's farm laws rolled back is the first priority as these will anyway destroy them," he said.

He said it is now up to the Centre to accept their demands.

New laws don't stop old system, says Modi amid farmer protest

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday spoke in defense of the farm laws again as his ministers rushed to discuss the mammoth protest against the new laws, which is threatening to cut off the roads to the national capital. Camping at Delhi borders, the farmers, angry over Union Home Minister Amit Shah's conditional proposal for early talks, have spoken of a gherao of the city.

Over the last 24 hours, Mr Shah has held a series of meetings with his cabinet colleagues. Reaching out to farmers -- who have accused the government of

making the new laws for the benefit of corporates -- PM Modi said: "I know that decades of falsehood do put apprehensions in the minds of farmers... I want to say this from the bank of Mother Ganga - we are not working with the intention of deceiving. Our intentions are as holy as the water of river Ganga".

If someone thinks that the earlier system is better, how is this law stopping anyone, bhai?" he added, in a bid to reassure farmers that the new open market system will not mean the end to the traditional mandis and minimum support prices fixed by the government.

Farmers protest may act as Covid 'superspreader' event, say experts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The protest by thousands of farmers who have stayed put at various border points of Delhi for the fifth consecutive day on Monday against the Centre's new agriculture reform laws may act as 'superspreader' event for coronavirus infection, say experts. The national capital has already been witnessing a spike in COVID-19 cases post Diwali celebrations and amid rising pollution levels.

Samiran Panda, who heads the Epidemiology and Communicable Diseases (ECD) division of the ICMR, sought strict compliance to protective

and preventive behaviour to curb the spread of the infection.

A protest is a mass gathering and thus from a public health perspective, I would suggest protective and preventive behaviours against the spread of coronavirus infection failing which a superspreading event might set in.

farmer fears this disease at the moment. All they have on their minds is to get these laws rolled back."

Tractor-trolleys, farm equipment turn into temporary shelters

PNS ■ SONIPAT (HARYANA)

Tractor-trolleys and key farm equipment have turned into temporary shelters for thousands of farmers who have assembled at the borders of the new farm laws. The ongoing protests by thousands of farmers entered the fifth day on Monday, with the protesters threatening to block all five entry points to Delhi. As temperatures have dipped, the farmers demanding that the laws be repealed are spending the chilly nights inside their tractor-trolleys covered with



tarpaulin, which they have turned into temporary shelters.

Most of the farmers have brought at least two trolleys

with each tractor with one of them carrying ration and other essentials and the other being used to accommodate the pro-

testers. Stubble or crop residue, disposal of which otherwise becomes a major challenge for the farmers, is also coming in handy as many have cushioned their trolleys with layers of straw and laid mattresses over it to protect them from the cold. Night temperatures over the last few days have been settling in the range of around 9 degrees Celsius. The tractor-trolleys have occupied over a 10-km-long area in this Haryana district which lies along the Ambala-Delhi national highway. Among the protesters are several men and women, some of them aged

over 70 years. Flags of various farmers' outfits from Punjab and Haryana can be seen fluttering atop the tractors, some of which are fitted with loudspeakers and used by the leaders of peasants' bodies to address the gatherings.

The protesting farmers say they will force the Centre to repeal the anti-farmer laws.

Having gathered here in thousands amid the coronavirus pandemic, they claim adverse conditions do not affect them as they are used to various challenges anyway while working in the fields.

"If these laws are imple-

mented, farmers will be destroyed," said Trilok Singh, a farmer from Amritsar as he sipped freshly prepared tea with some bread and biscuits.

Protesting farmers have said that they have come prepared for a long stir and have stocked themselves with ration, clothes, cooking gas cylinders, quilts and other essentials.

Another farmer Kuldeep Singh said, "When the Centre first brought ordinance before these laws were passed, did they consult farmers at any stage. When farmers don't want these reforms, why are these being thrust upon us?"

Tendulkar comes to the rescue of kids

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar has helped in providing treatment to 100 underprivileged children across six states - Maharashtra, West Bengal, Assam, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

This partnership is with a foundation called Ekam, and is targeted at children receiving treatment in government and trust hospitals. Children from underprivileged families,

suffering from critical ailments and those who cannot afford to follow up on their elective medical costs, got the support from Tendulkar's foundation. Earlier this month, Tendulkar had supported Makunda Hospital in Assam's Karimganj district with paediatric equipments.

Tendulkar had also participated in an initiative with UNICEF on World Children's Day, encouraging children to play a key part in shaping the future of the world.

NGT seeks report against illegal op of automobile unit in Sangrur

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal has directed the Punjab Pollution Control Board to submit a report on a plea against illegal operation of an automobile unit at Ahmedgarh city in Sangrur district.

A bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice A K Goel did not issue notice to the unit and only sought information from the state pollution control board about the action taken.

"Let the Punjab State PCB furnish factual and action taken report in the matter. We are not issuing notice to the unit at this stage as we are first obtaining the information from the State PCB about the facts and the action taken in exercise of statutory powers of the State PCB.

The applicant may serve a set of papers on the State PCB and file affidavit of service within one week by email, the bench said. The tribunal was hearing a plea filed by Daljit Kaur against the illegal operation of M/s H S Automobile at Ahmedgarh in Sangrur.

According to the applicant, the unit is being operated in a residential area without

Elderly woman killed in bear attack at Korba

PNS ■ KORBA

A 65-year-old woman has been mauled to death by a bear in Chhattisgarh's Korba district, a forest official said on Monday. The incident took place on Sunday evening when the victim, Phulkunwar Gond, a native of Fulsar village, was attacked by the animal in Kendai forest range, he said.

The woman was heading on foot to her brother's place in Hardeva village after going to a weekly market in Korbi area.

Most important challenge facing region is terrorism: India at SCO

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Monday said the most important challenge facing the region is terrorism and that elimination of this threat will help it realise its true potential including in the economic sphere.

In an address at the virtual meet of the council of heads of government of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu particularly mentioned about cross-border terrorism and called for combating the menace under a collective approach.

In a clear reference to Pakistan, Naidu said: "We are particularly concerned about states that leverage terrorism

as an instrument of state policy." "The most important challenge faced by us is terrorism, particularly cross-border terrorism," he said. Naidu said that "elimination" of the threat of terrorism will help the region realise its true potential.

India is hosting the meet for the first time after it gained full

membership of the influential grouping in 2017 and it will take place in the virtual format. In another reference to Pakistan, he said it is unfortunate that there were attempts to deliberately bring bilateral issues into the SCO and described it as a blatant violation of principles and norms of the charter of the grouping.

In mid-September, India's National Security Advisor Ajit Doval walked out of a virtual meeting of top security officials of the SCO member states after the Pakistani representative projected a map that inaccurately depicted Kashmir. India had slammed Pakistan for the "blatant disregard" to the norms of the meeting.



Maya: Reconsider anti-conversion law

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

BSP president Mayawati on Monday asked the Uttar Pradesh government to reconsider the new anti-conversion law as it is full of "doubts and apprehensions", prompting a quick response from the newly elected BJP MP and former head of state's SC/ST commission, Brijalal who claimed that majority of those becoming victims of love jihad belong to the Dalit and backward castes.

"The ordinance on love jihad brought by the UP government in a hurry is full of doubts and apprehensions. There is neither any recognition, nor acceptability to conversion through force or deceit in the country. There are many laws already effective in this regard. The government needs to reconsider the new law," Mayawati said in a tweet in Hindi.

Her remarks come after Uttar Pradesh registered its first case under the new law in Bareilly district based on a complaint from the father of a young woman.

In a statement issued here on Sunday, Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Awansh Awasthi said a case was registered on the complaint by Tikaram who accused a man

-- Uvaish Ahmed -- of the same village of trying to convert his daughter through "allurement" (baha-phuslaakar).

In a prompt rejoinder, BJP MP Brijalal in a series of tweets said, "Mayawati ji, do you know that mostly the Dalit, backward and most backward castes have become victim of love jihad? Do these castes not have the right to live with respect? Tell me who are you with."

In another tweet, he said, "Most of the Dalits, oppressed and most backward caste people have not only lost their original religion but also their existence is at risk. Is it a crime to provide security to these people?"

INDIA CORNER

Five girl students put 'in-charge' of police stations in Bahraich for a day

To apprise youngsters about the functioning of the police, five girl students were put "in-charge" of police stations in Bahraich for a day under the "Mission Shakti" campaign, SP Vinod Mishra said on Monday. Anchal, a class 10 student of Gajadhar area, was given the responsibility of Fakharpur police station on Sunday. Similarly, Mansi Tiwari, a student of class 12, was given the charge of Khairighat police station. The SP said the initiative had been taken to apprise the girls with the functioning of the police force and at the same time, remove the fear of police from the young minds. All the five girls, including Uma Singh of class 11 (Kotwali Dehat), Era Fatima of class 10 (Nanpara) and Tanishka Singh of class 10 (Payagpur) resolved the complaints of locals with the help of police officials, the SP said. One of the five girls Anchal also accompanied policemen to Dujipura village to resolve a dispute between two brothers.

J-K DDC polls: 17 govt employees suspended for MCC violation

The Jammu and Kashmir administration has "temporarily" suspended 17 government employees, including seven teachers and three policemen, in Kishtwar district for allegedly violating the Model Code of Conduct ahead of the second phase of the District Development Council elections, officials said Monday. District Panchayat Election Officer, Kishtwar, Ashok Kumar Sharma ordered the attachment of the employees of Dachhan block on Sunday following complaints against them, the officials said. The second phase of the DDC elections, along with panchayat bypolls, is scheduled to start across Jammu and Kashmir at 7 am on Tuesday, covering 43 constituencies to seal the fate of 321 candidates – 125 in 18 seats of Jammu division and 196 in 25 constituencies of Kashmir division. The attached employees include seven teachers, a forester, a policeman and two Special Police Officers, the officials said.

Free ambulance service for road accident victims in WB

PNS ■ KOLKATA

To take the victims to nearby hospitals or medical colleges or trauma care centre within 15 to 20 minutes after getting calls regarding the accident. This is in a planning stage and we are dying to start it as soon as possible, he told PTI.

There will be two types of ambulances basic life support ambulances and the advance life support ambulances, he said, adding that a toll free number will be given.

The Health department is in talks with the Public Works Department (PWD), police and the transport department, he said.

"This will definitely help us in saving the lives of road accident victims. We are targeting



'Consent to Establish' and 'Consent to Operate' under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 and the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.

The Punjab Pollution Control Board issued notice dated June 16, 2020 pointing out the illegal operation of the unit but no further action has been taken.

PM dedicates to nation six-lane highway

PNS ■ VARANASI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday dedicated to the nation six-laning of the 73-km Varanasi-Priyagraj National Highway during his visit to his Lok Sabha constituency.

After the event, he will visit Kashi Vishwanath Mandir and inspect the Kashi Vishwanath temple corridor project.

The prime minister will

then attend the Dev Deepawali Mahotsav. He will depart from Raj Ghat and view Dev Deepawali celebrations from Raj Ghat to Chet Singh Ghat.

Modi will then arrive at Ravidas Ghat Jetty and pay floral tributes to the statue of Sant Ravidas. Before flying back to New Delhi, he will visit the Sarnath Archaeological site and watch a light and sound show.

Starting with at least 150 ambulances, the state government is at the moment setting up a detailed map of the accident-prone zones and the nearby hospitals, he said.

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for the same, the state government will have to bear a cost of around Rs 30 crore, the official said.

"This will definitely help us in saving the lives of road accident victims. We are targeting

the victims to nearby hospitals or medical colleges or trauma care centre within 15 to 2



Cong's State pillars

The party's CMs have kept the farmers' issue boiling, enough for the Govt to take note. Can the leadership build on this?



Prime Minister Narendra Modi has had to clarify in every public speech within days that the new farm laws are progressive and he is just as protectionist about farmers' interests, then the latter's agitation has worked. If Home Minister Amit Shah is trying to douse the fire and attempting reconciliatory talks after his own partymen are labelling the stir as a Khalistani and Maoist plot, then the *kisan* unions have had their way. And though the protesters have largely stayed away from politicians on principle, the fact that Punjab's Congress Chief Minister, Capt Amarinder Singh, has been consistently pushing their cause, no matter how self-serving that might

be, has given the farmers' campaign a political heft that has blunted the edge of the Centre's unilateralism. In fact, it is the first time that Congress Chief Ministers like Singh and Chhattisgarh's Bhupesh Baghel have turned the tide of national discourse by crusading against the farm Acts and forcing a discussion on consensus politics, something that the central Congress leadership has fallen far short of. Singh's Government has not only brought its own amendment Bills against the farm Acts, Congress MLAs are on a relay dharna in Delhi demanding an audience with the President, who may not entertain a challenge to the Central laws. But at least Singh has given the Congress a talking point at a time when it's languishing by the wayside. Of course, the Punjab Government could have simply brought in its own law to pick up all State produce at Minimum Support Price (MSP), regardless of the Central laws that allow farmers access to wider markets but throw them at the risk of being cheated out of a fair price given the competition. There are fears that the older regulated system, while co-existing, would be weakened by a parallel market and Singh played on these by pushing an amendment to the Central law itself, knowing full well that it was a negative rather than assertive action but would be more politically loaded. The first amendment says that the sale of wheat and paddy (which are the State's cash crops) will be valid only if the seller pays a price equal to or greater than the MSP announced by the Central government and that any violation would be punishable. The second Bill reintroduces the market fees or licences for private players outside the Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) mandis, which the Central law has abolished. This it says will be used to create a distress fund for small and marginal farmers; hence is populist. The third Bill attacks the central Act that gives unlimited power of stocking essential commodities to traders and reassigns that right to itself, arguing that production, supply and distribution of goods make for a State subject. Punjab is also planning to tweak the definition of a "trade area", where farmers, traders and electronic trading/transaction platforms are given freedom to deal in farmers' produce without any restrictions, to cover its limits. It is impossible for the Centre or food majors to agree to such clauses but Singh has scored over the might of the ruling BJP or any sane argument by crusading with zeal and symbolism. Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and Baghel, too, have pushed amendment Bills but with not as many punishing clauses. But the three have certainly built momentum on an issue that matters across heartland India and have sustained and mobilised a movement around it, strong enough to give the Congress its first cogent tool as an Opposition.

In fact, strategy or not, the three Congress Chief Ministers are not just holding on to their turfs but are articulating positions on national issues. Baghel and Gehlot have been warning against the brutal communalisation of personal freedoms implicit in the proposed "love jihad" laws by BJP-ruled States. Singh has refused the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) entry without his permission. Unless there is a strategy to deflect attention from the central leadership, the Congress chieftains are doing pretty well as the voice of the Opposition on their own. The problem is people still want to hear the central leadership and expect it to steer the discourse. But ever since the Hathras rape-murder case, when the Gandhi scions visited the victim's family amid high drama, they have been silent. In fact, that was a bit of a hit and run given their belligerence as we are yet to hear from them on a follow-up to the case. Contrast that to the Chief Ministers, who have stayed with their respective causes. Also Singh, Gehlot and Baghel have defended the leadership tooth and nail, speaking out against the Congress' dissenters, saying it was more important to coalesce against the BJP on graver issues than fight among themselves or lampoon the leadership. And that "electoral defeats were not the yardstick for leadership change." Question is will the Congress leadership reward this loyalty and bring its chieftains forward or use them for fire-fighting? The fact that Singh and Baghel are more popular than Rahul Gandhi in their home States shows that the Congress does have leaders of merit, who collectively have it in them to revive the party and keep it relevant. The Central leadership has no choice but to devolve power and build a semblance of representational democracy in its organisational structure. In fact, the Congress has historically had strong regional leaders. If only it were to nurture their strengths than making their continuity conditional on doing the bidding of its first family, the party's organisational matrix wouldn't have been lying in shreds across States. Nor would the grassroots workers go fortune-hunting to other parties, fearing their voice wouldn't ever matter. Will the Congress learn to identify its assets first?

Vaccine troubles

What does the case of the volunteer in Chennai tell us about medical trials?



While a 40-year old man, apparently a business consultant from Chennai, has claimed that he has suffered from adverse reactions to the trial vaccine administered by the Serum Institute of India (SII) during the Phase-III clinical trials, we do not know the full details of the case. This is the vaccine developed by Anglo-Swedish pharmaceutical firm AstraZeneca and University of Oxford where SII is a partner. For one, we still do not know whether the individual was given the new vaccine or a placebo, which is why his allegations raised by his lawyers are slightly suspect. The instant countersuit by SII makes one suspect whether this was

just an extortion attempt but one thing is clear, the individual involved has little chance of success in court as volunteers to clinical trials for any medication should be fully aware that they can suffer extremely adverse reactions to trial medication and those reactions could also mean death.

The extremely rushed research and development for vaccines to counter the COVID-19 virus, which has devastated the global economy and driven millions across the world back into poverty, might yet be successful but rushing clinical trials will mean that certain adverse effects and even a death or two might occur. Those who volunteer for such trials should be made fully aware of the risks and they usually are. In case this is genuine, and it well might be, the individual and his family should be compensated for his tribulations. The system of clinical trials in India should ensure that those who take upon the civic responsibility to better mankind by subjecting their bodies to such insane risks should be given adequate coverage for the danger involved. Ever so often in India, many trials are highly risky and those who volunteer, often from poorer families, are dumped and left without compensation or recourse if things go wrong. There may be more than what meets the eye in this particular case. But that should not take away from the tremendous risks and troubles that many clinical trial volunteers put themselves through. This also highlights that companies involved in clinical trials, whether they are large, global pharmaceutical firms or small research firms in India, should be more open and transparent about what the volunteers suffer. SII would do well to tell us the entire story lest this becomes a case where the anti-vaccine movement can get a foot in the door in India.

We need to recognise as a society that all of our economies around the world are built on the backs of women's unpaid labour.

American philanthropist —Melinda Gates

Happy Gurpurab to everyone celebrating. May the blessing of Guru Nanak ji always be with us.

Former cricketer —Sachin Tendulkar

Today, our farmers are forced to ask for their own rights! Shame on BJP govt for putting barriers to farmers in their own country.

Congress leader —Vivek Bansal

India considers SCO as an important regional organisation to promote cooperation in the areas of peace, security, trade, economy & culture.

Secretary (West),MEA —Vikas Swarup

Don't blame FBI

Sir — The never-ending, well until January 20 to be precise, denial of the presidential election outcome is getting more extreme each day. However, US President Donald Trump's lawsuits have been failing with his pleas getting in US courts.

The latest bit from a Trump interview — "This is total fraud and how, the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) and Department of Justice, I don't know, maybe they're involved" — shows that doubts will always remain around the verdict.

Surely, the FBI and DOJ are beyond reproach as their basic purpose is to protect the US and its way of life. They serve the country and its President, regardless of who is in power.

The 1960s TV series, *F.B.I.*, starring Efrem Zimbalist, Jr., may have been over the top but the good guys are still serving their country by working for the FBI and not against it. Shame on you, President Trump!

A court in Pennsylvania has dismissed a lawsuit filed by Trump's team, observing that "voters, not lawyers choose the President." The judgement came four days after Pennsylvania

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Beyond the kitchen counter

Onion, which is a staple kitchen item among others for an average Indian, is an essential ingredient for many cuisines and recipes. From spicy curries to tangy relishes, it is impossible to imagine cooking anything without it. But it also has high medicinal value.

If folk remedies are to be believed, onions could treat cold, cough, asthma and bronchitis. Among other nutritional benefits, onions stimulate growth of healthy bifidobacteria in the colon and help in lowering blood lipids and are thus effective in managing cholesterol levels. The sulfide in onion reduces tumor growth and is being explored as a possible ingredient in the cure for cancer.

The flavonoids in onion help in reducing bad cholesterol while thiosulfinate thins out the blood further. These traditional practitioners say, reduce the risk of heart attack and stroke. Onion also stimulates hair growth because of the huge content of sulphur in it. It stimulates blood flow and produces collagen, which helps in the growth of hair. One can extract its juice, mix it with almond oil or coconut oil and massage it on the scalp; leave it for around 45 minutes; then wash

it with warm water. One can also mix onion juice with lemon juice and massage the scalp with it. This prevents hair loss and dandruff.

In these times of immunity-boosters, we must tap into our plant wealth and heritage and develop a holistic well-being routine in our daily lives. Much of our herbal heritage needs to be recognised and patented for pharmaceutical uses.

Jubel D'Cruz
Mumbai

certified Trump's Democratic rival Joe Biden as the winner in the State which has 20 electoral college votes.

Trump told reporters on Thursday that it would be "hard" to concede to Biden, a Democrat. He said he would leave the White House if the Electoral College declares Biden

as the winner but made it clear he was not prepared to "concede" the election.

Dennis Fitzgerald
Melbourne, Australia

Farmers' woes

Sir — In a democracy, it beats reason that its police force wants to

use stadiums to imprison protesters (farmers). It is a small mercy that the Delhi Government refused to grant the police the permission to do so. These farmers have simply been protesting against a law that they don't find favourable. They have as much right to make themselves heard and be invited to negotiations in

the consultative nature of democracy. Cracking down on them with force is no solution.

Given the recent decisions on Shaheen Bagh and other cases, pertaining to protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, this brutal silencing of protest was all but expected.

The discontent of farmers in this country has been growing over the years due to the Central government's careless economic policies. These have debilitated the rural economy. Farmers have experienced a growing mismatch between their production efforts and income under the current regime.

Climate change and its outcomes have already worsened the farmers' condition. The new farm Acts expose them to market fluctuations, hence the insecurity. The community of farmers is thus right in feeling agitated. The Government can try and keep farmers under control but it cannot deny the discontent that is growing among 60 per cent of the country's voting population. They could turn the tide.

Bhagwan Thadani
Mumbai

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

opinion

06

Why Modi still stands tall

The answer lies in his minutiae precision on last-mile micro-management of 269 key projects, down to the district level percolation



BINDU DALMIA

As we enter the last month of a calamitous year, my year-end musings have been pivoted around the key question — What led to a surge in Modi's popularity while the opposite happened to the elected leaders of US and UK? Why did his persona prevail despite the pandemic challenging resources and policies? I would say that he kept the response specific to our reality rather than promising the moon and went in for long-term transformative measures that would equip the nation against any such unforeseen crisis in the future.

Trusteeship paradigm of governing the largest democracy:

At the recently concluded G20 summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for a new global index based on "respecting nature in the spirit of trusteeship of Mother Earth." His collaborative response in sync with multi-lateral institutions to prioritise ESG-centric concerns (based on the tri-pillar of environment, sustainability and governance) commits to a much-needed collective responsibility of all nations in managing the planet's resources.

By the same yardstick, the Prime Minister's post-pandemic management of his own country has paved the way for a new and distinct style of governing democracies on a similar "trusteeship paradigm."

When benchmarked against global counterparts, Modi's crises-management places him in the league of the tallest global leaders for coming across as a trustee-head of the nation, who from the beginning, remained visible, accountable, admonishing, nudging and persuasive. At the same time, he was empathetically "shepherding" his people, instead of resorting to punitive measures that would have regressed economic recovery.

Democracies, noticeably for the last five years, have mutated their strains, deviating from the original concept of fair, inclusive and participative governance to morphing into illiberal and totalitarian regimes. Viewed in this context, a "trusteeship model of democracy" is in sharp contrast to the ascent of authoritarian leaders, even in the most advanced democracies.

Was the Modi-led Government's response to the crisis financially adequate? This will



remain a subjective question as developed countries had greater flexibility for welfareist measures to cushion vulnerable sections of society. In contrast, injecting four stimulus packages worth 10 per cent of the GDP to fire up the economy was the extent to which the Government could stretch its limits, with the fiscal deficit doubling to 7.7 per cent of the GDP.

Were India's containment measures and public messaging of the COVID crisis the best? Certainly not, when compared to Vietnam, Taiwan, Canada, Germany or New Zealand.

Was Modi's early lockdown proactive or premature? Initially, the response to relief and rehabilitation was ad-hoc and knee-jerk. But then the Government swung into streamlining Centre-State coordination for DBTs and food grains reaching 800 million people.

During disaster management, it is impossible to forecast the duration or depths of *force majeure* damages as no leader can possibly see the end of the tunnel clearly when adversities strike. While the US and the UK's health infrastructure is ranked among the best by the Global Health Security Index, India's "mortality rate per million" remained among the lowest.

Modi's popularity: Modi 2.0 in 2020 is a distinctly changed person in image, in demeanour, in electoral rhetoric, in elevating the national agenda above narrow political, ideological or populist gains, and in taking the moral high ground

at international fora by demanding the reform of archaic multilateral institutions.

As we enter the last month of a calamitous year, one is compelled to assess just what was it about Modi that he not only retained but exponentially widened his electoral base as seen in the recently-concluded Bihar elections, despite a severely pandemic-ravaged economy?

India is now uniquely positioned for a faster climb-back after a contraction of -7.5 per cent, with the grounds being laid to expand economic activity. Optimism for an economic rebound is based on the structural reforms undertaken in 2020, the lowered rate of corporate taxation, a stable currency backed by strong foreign reserves, vibrant FDI flows of \$35.73 billion and the Finance Minister's nudge to increase CAPEX spending by public sector enterprises to drive economic growth.

The answer lies in Modi's minutiae precision on last-mile micro-management of 269 key projects, down to the district level percolation. As India approaches the delivery stage of the vaccine, Modi's forward-planning is becoming more job-stepped by visiting vaccine hubs to fine-tune distribution mechanisms, down to assessing the availability of cold storage chains and ancillary equipment like syringes.

India ready for economic take-off? In January 2021, the levers of global growth are expected to rebalance more favourably towards a partial return to globalisation, which is a distinct reversal from the economic insularity of the Trump era. With President-elect Joe Biden taking charge next month, economic recovery is expected to accelerate with the liberalisation of international

trade as America regains its leadership as the primary engine of growth, instead of China, which augurs well for global recovery.

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Going beyond crisis management, the Government needs to scale up human resource capital and find newer avenues for raising capital resources.

Second, if we aspire to make India a "Plus One" investment destination, gaps must be plugged for delays in contract enforcement. India takes 1,440 days to implement contracts against 150 days in Singapore. We need to hasten dispute resolution and follow Vietnam's example of allocating large land parcels on lease/rent/ mortgage.

Third, the pandemic forces a rethink at our woefully inadequate investment in healthcare, education and labour-skilling,

I conclude this analysis by paraphrasing an opinion from *The New York Times*, which lauded Modi's initiatives by stating that he fared "better than many peers because he acted decisively, pre-emptively and relatively early...Modi's success, analysts say, may be more durable. He's widely seen as a mobiliser, not a despot."

(The author is a columnist and Chairperson for the National Committee on Financial Inclusion at the Niti Aayog)



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Bhagwan Thadani
Mumbai

FIRST COLUMN

A polarising municipal poll

The GHMC campaign was centred around comments on Pakistan, Jinnah and a Hindu-Muslim narrative, not civic issues



KALYANI SHANKAR

Whoever thought that a civic poll would create so much excitement, passion and polarisation? The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) election scheduled for today (December 1) has become an unprecedented high-profile political event. It is being fought with the same vigour as the Lok Sabha polls by not only the BJP which is aiming high, but also by the other players like the ruling Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS), the All-India Majlis-e-Itehaadul Muslimmeen (AIMIM) and the Congress Party. The BJP is ambitious and wants to replace the TRS. This is an indication of what will come in the 2023 Assembly polls. The party has an advantage because the Congress, which ruled the State, for many decades and the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), which was in power till a few years ago, left a space for the BJP to occupy. The TDP is almost wiped out and the Congress receded to fourth place in the recent Lok Sabha polls.

Eyebrows are being raised at the way the BJP has fielded national heavyweights for campaigning for a municipal poll, like the party chief JP Nadda, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Though he did not campaign even Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Hyderabad to review the progress of the COVID-19 vaccine clinical research on November 28. First of all, the BJP, which surprised everyone by winning four Lok Sabha seats out of 17 in Telangana in 2019, got the momentum and continued with another surprise victory in the Duggi bypolls early in November. After the recent stunning performance in the Bihar Assembly elections, the party's morale is high. Second, if the BJP wins the GHMC polls, it means that the saffron party is continuing its winning spree.

Moreover, the BJP is positioning itself to spread its footprint further South. As of now, the party is weak there as it has only one State Government (Karnataka) in its kitty. Third, the BJP wants to cut the AIMIM to size. The Asaduddin Owaisi-led AIMIM has always been strong in the Hyderabad region. Owaisi has expanded his party to Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The AIMIM is quite upbeat after winning five seats in the recent Bihar polls and wants to expand in West Bengal in next year's Assembly elections, too. However, this will cut into the Muslim vote bank and it will be helpful for the BJP to split the Muslim votes. Even though the TRS has always contested against the AIMIM in every election, the former has enjoyed issue-based support from the latter. The two parties tactically announced that there would be no tie-up in the municipal polls in order to protect their turf.

The BJP, the TRS and the AIMIM have all been generous in spending money and have more than adequate muscle power and manpower to fight this election for different reasons. The BJP wants to spread its wings further in the South. The AIMIM has always won in the Hyderabad region and is protecting its turf. As for the ruling TRS, it is a fight for its prestige. The party, which has been on a winning spree since the State was bifurcated in 2014, made a clever and surprise move by advancing the civic poll by two months. The TRS had won 99 seats in the previous civic elections while the AIMIM won 44 seats, the BJP three and the Congress two.

The BJP is attacking the TRS for its politics of appeasement. Plus, the recent flood relief measures have been inadequate. The Musi River that runs through the city was in spate last month and tanks and nullahs developed breaches and low-lying areas were waterlogged. About 50 municipal wards were affected due to it. The BJP cleverly wants to cash in on this. Interestingly, while the GHMC poll is normally fought on civic problems like water, sewerage, sanitation, roads and other amenities, the campaign showed a polarising trend. It was centred around polarising comments on Pakistan, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, allegations involving Rohingya refugees and a Hindu-Muslim narrative, not civic issues.

This led to the Director-General of Police Mahender Reddy to warn the parties after a security meeting. "They are trying to incite communal trouble. We are examining the speeches carefully. Action will be taken as per law against those trying to create disturbances," he cautioned. Hyderabad has one of the largest Muslim populations for a city in India; about 44 per cent of the people in the city are Muslim while 52 per cent are Hindu. All the parties have been generous in promising sops to the electorate if they win. The BJP, the TRS and the Congress have promised free drinking water supply to the city, while the BJP has promised a free vaccine to tackle the Novel Coronavirus and renaming of Hyderabad as Bhagya Nagar.

The Chief Minister of Telangana, Kalyan Kumar Chandrasekhar Rao, is threatening to mobilise a non-BJP Opposition front including the Trinamool Congress, the Samajwadi Party, the Nationalist Congress Party and so on, in an attempt to reverse the anti-BJP front.

Opinion polls have come up with varied findings, giving the maximum seats to the TRS at 85, while almost all of them see the BJP winning nearly 30 per cent of the votes. The 35 votes of the MLAs and MPs in the region would go in favour of the TRS. However, it all depends on whom Dame Luck favours in the end.

(The writer is a senior journalist)

analysis

07

POINT COUNTERPOINT

THEY (AUSTRALIA) HAVE OUTPLAYED US.
WE WERE INEFFECTIVE WITH THE BALL
AND DIDN'T HIT THE AREAS.
—INDIAN CRICKET CAPTAIN

VIRAT KOHLI



KOHLI IS AN IMPULSIVE CAPTAIN. HE IS MAKING
TOO MANY CHANGES IN HIS BOWLING. AND THIS IS
AN AREA THAT HE NEEDS TO TAKE CARE OF.
—FORMER INDIA PACER

ASHISH NEHRA

Plug the leaks

The Government should stop selling food at a subsidised price through the PDS. Instead, it should limit its role to crediting subsidy directly to the accounts of beneficiaries



UTTAM GUPTA

Since 2014, the Narendra Modi Government has weeded out close to 44 million bogus ration cards by using the Information Technology (IT) infrastructure viz. digitisation, seeding of Aadhaar on ration cards, electronic point of sale machines at retail shops and so on. However, this addresses only a small aspect of the problem and that, too, is unlikely to be rooted out completely with the use of technology alone. Besides, large-scale diversion and black marketing of grain, inclusion of the privileged among beneficiaries, a ballooning subsidy bill and so on will persist so long as the extant system of routing food subsidy through State agencies continues. What then is the way forward? The Government should stop selling food at a subsidised price. Instead, it should limit its role to crediting subsidy directly to the accounts of beneficiaries. When foodgrains at ₹1/2/3 per kg are not available, these maladies will be automatically nipped in the bud.

Under the National Food Security Act (NFSAs), the Union Government arranges for supply of wheat, rice and coarse cereals to the beneficiaries at ₹2/3/1 per kg, which is a fraction of the cost of procurement, handling and distribution (eg. 1/15th in case of wheat). Every person whose name is mentioned on the ration card is eligible to receive five kg of rice or wheat per month. In addition, during April-June, to mitigate the impact of COVID-19, the PM Garib Kalyan Yojna added a "free" five kg of rice or wheat per person per month to all 815 million individual beneficiaries under the NFSAs. Besides one kg of free pulses per month was provided to every family. These additional provisions were extended for a further five months till November.

The supplies are made by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and other State agencies on behalf of the Central Government, which reimburses to the former the excess of the cost of purchase, handling and distribution over the price charged from the beneficiaries i.e. ₹2/3/1 per kg on additional supplies (during the eight months of the current year, this is zero). This reimbursement or food subsidy is paid from the Central Budget. In recent years, food subsidy has increased to frightening levels. During 2019-20, it was ₹2,19,000 crore. For 2020-21, prior to COVID-19, the likely spend was estimated to be ₹2,53,000 crore. Including the impact of free food during April-November or about ₹1,50,000 crore, this will scale up to ₹4,03,000 crore. In case the free food scheme is extended further, the spend will be much higher.

The ballooning food subsidy is putting a huge stress on the Union Budget. Faced with a shortfall in tax collection in recent years and the overarching need to contain fiscal deficit, the Centre has been making short payments to the FCI, forcing the latter to borrow heavily to sustain its operations. The situation is so pathetic that since 2016-17, the FCI has been drawing funds from the National Small Savings Fund (NSSF). As on March 31, the cumulative borrowings from the NSSF were to the tune of ₹3,30,000 crore.

The allocation for the current year being ₹1,26,000 crore (₹1,16,000 crore provided in the Budget, plus ₹10,000 crore in the first supplementary demands for grants) against the requirement of ₹4,03,000 crore, the shortfall is ₹2,77,000 crore. If no further supplementary authorisation comes, the FCI will have to borrow all of this from the NSSF, taking its borrowings to a gargantuan ₹6,07,000 crore as of March 2021. Though staying on the FCI's balance sheet, this mammoth debt

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THE GOVERNMENT CAN TRANSFER ₹280 PER MONTH (SUBSIDY AT THE RATE OF ₹28 PER KG FOR 10 KG) TO THE BENEFICIARY'S ACCOUNT TO ENABLE HIM/HER TO BUY 10 KG FROM THE MARKET BY PAYING ₹300 (INCLUDING ₹20 FROM HIS/HER POCKET). THIS WILL STRIKE AT THE VERY ROOT OF DIVERSION, PILFERAGE AND BLACK MARKETING. WHEN FOODGRAINS AT ₹1/2/3 PER KG ARE JUST NOT AVAILABLE, THE VERY THOUGHT OF MAKING A QUICK BUCK WILL BE NIPPED IN THE BUD”
“



is entirely the liability of the Union Government and will need to be serviced from the latter's tax collections in the future. The core feature of this scheme, or supply of wheat or rice at a price almost close to zero, may be a boon for the beneficiaries but ends up being a bane for the economy. The availability of wheat at ₹2 per kg through the Public Distribution System (PDS) under the NFSAs, when the market price is a minimum ₹30 per kg, is a huge allurement to all those involved in its implementation. No wonder, there is large-scale diversion of foodgrain from rail unloading points and godowns of the FCI. Trucks disappear on way to the retail sale points. Then there are millions of non-existent or fake beneficiaries.

There is a clamour for becoming beneficiaries under the scheme even as there are numerous instances of people selling their subsidised quota of foodgrain, say wheat bought at ₹2 per kg, to dubious traders at ₹12 per kg or more. Clearly, there are millions availing subsidised food despite being above the poverty line. The official word on the number of poor in India is no more than 25-30 per cent; yet the beneficiaries under NFSAs are nearly over 66 per cent.

Further, since the handling and distribution cost, besides the Minimum Support Price (MSP) paid to farmers, is reimbursed to the FCI and other State agencies on "actual" food subsidy, inefficiency and inflated cost claims (including bogus) are inevitable. The "loaders" getting away with monthly salary in lakhs easily pass muster under a cost-based mechanism. Reports of disappearance of food stocks in Punjab causing a loss of over ₹20,000 crore to the exchequer in 2016 are still fresh in people's memory. Such inefficiencies and irregularities have also been pointed out by the Comptroller and Auditor

General (CAG) of India. Meanwhile, the most deserving (poorest of the poor) continue to be deprived of their full requirement. This is because supplies under the NFSAs at five kg per person per month barely cover 50 per cent of the requirement of a person, which is 10 kg per month, as estimated by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO). Having to buy the balance five kg at a very high price, say ₹30 per kg is an affront to the poor.

Weeding out of 44 million bogus beneficiaries in itself may appear to be a big accomplishment. But seen in the broader perspective, this addresses only a small aspect of the problem and that, too, is unlikely to be rooted out completely with the use of technology alone.

Besides, other problems will persist so long as the system of routing food subsidy through State agencies continues.

In early 2015, a committee under Dr Shanta Kumar, a senior BJP leader, had recognised the need to deal with non-deserving beneficiaries and restricting subsidised food only to the very poor. It recommended a cut in the number of those eligible for subsidised food from 67 per cent to 40 per cent and restricting the benefit of ₹1/2/3 per kg only to the poorest of poor people under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana, while increasing the supply to seven kg per person. Others should pay 50 per cent of the MSP paid to farmers.

Even as that report is lying in cold storage, its prescription is nowhere near addressing the flaws in the existing system. The way forward is to stop routing subsidy through the State agencies. In other words, the Government should not sell food at subsidised price; instead, it should limit its role to crediting subsidy directly to the beneficiary's account. The Government can transfer ₹280 per month (subsidy at the rate of ₹28 per kg for 10 kg) to the ben-

eficiary's account to enable him/her to buy 10 kg from the market by paying ₹300 (including ₹20 from his/her pocket). This will strike at the very root of diversion, pilferage, black marketing. When, foodgrains at ₹1/2/3 per kg are just not available, the very thought of making a quick buck will be nipped in the bud. As for the FCI et al, while they will still be involved in purchase, handling and distribution, they will operate like any other business entity and be compelled to operate efficiently and keep costs low.

With private entities, too, allowed to directly buy from farmers, stock farm produce sans any limit (courtesy, the three farm laws recently enacted by the Centre), there will be plenty of products available in the market ensuring fair amount of competition and enabling low price to consumers.

We will have a scenario where the market price of wheat could come down to ₹25 per kg or even less (from the existing minimum of ₹30 per kg) giving relief to everyone. Ditto for other products. It will have a deflationary impact down the line as all of the processed food will cost less. There will be huge saving in subsidy, which will be restricted only to the poor or about 300 million (down from existing 800 million) even as the Government need not have to pay for any slab such as inflated cost, inefficiencies, subsidy to bogus beneficiaries and so on. This will rein in fiscal deficit and trim borrowings, thereby preventing an unsustainable burden on the future generation of taxpayers.

The outcome of this approach is very promising; however, its adoption will require political courage and a fundamental change in the mindset of our policymakers.

(The writer is a New Delhi-based policy analyst)

A leader who believed in leaving no one behind

Indira Gandhi nationalised private banks, turned them into the biggest public sector banking system in the world which gave people loans for self-employment



EDUARDO FALEIRO

Recently, we commemorated the birth anniversary of the late Indira Gandhi, who has so far remained the only woman Prime Minister of India. She was considered the most popular leader of the masses of Independent India especially among the weaker sections of society. The Congress Party during Indira Gandhi's tenure coined the slogan "Garibi hatao" (eradicate poverty) and she led the efforts for the amendment to the Preamble of the Constitution to include the words, "Socialist, Secular and Democratic Republic of India."

The writer is a senior journalist

the repayment of large loans taken by big firms. For the benefit of the people, the number of bank branches was increased substantially, too.

In Goa, we had branches of the State Bank of India (SBI) and of a couple of other banks in the main towns but not in the villages. During my tenure, in the process of implementation of the 20-Point Programme, branches of different banks were opened in practically every village of our State. Similar steps were taken in all States across India.

Indira Gandhi was much criticised for imposing the Emergency in 1975 which lasted for 21 months. To my mind, Emergency was thought to be necessary at that time in view of the moves of the Opposition to destabilise the Government and the country. The Emergency was imposed on the advice of Sanjay Gandhi and Siddhartha Shankar Ray. Much of the criticism of the Emergency was on account of the Family Planning programme, which was implemented in North India

sometimes in a drastic and brutal manner. Sometime later, Indira Gandhi herself felt that imposition of the Emergency had been a mistake.

In Goa itself, Emergency proved to be beneficial. "Trains are running on time" was then a national slogan and in Goa the Administration became more efficient, black marketing and hoarding stopped and food and other articles of general consumption were easily available, which was not the case earlier. The support of the Goan people to the Government of India during Emergency benefited the Congress Party, which went on to win the Lok Sabha seat of South Goa. This was the first-ever election victory of the Congress Party in Goa. Until then, the Congress had not won a single seat either in Parliament, in the Assembly or even at the municipality level.

In the general elections held in 1977, Indira Gandhi lost her Lok Sabha seat from Rae Bareli but immediately thereafter in 1978 she won a by-election from the

Chikmagalur constituency. In November 1978, the Janata Party brought in a motion to expel Indira Gandhi from Parliament. My party, the Congress (U), supported this motion of the ruling party. However, I personally could not support it. I felt that I had won the Lok Sabha election in the name of Indira. I met Yashwantrao Chavan, who was the leader of the Congress (U) in Parliament. Chavan permitted me to oppose the motion. During the debate, while my party supported the motion, I strongly opposed it. Indira Gandhi was in the Lok Sabha during the debate and apparently she never forgot my support to her on that day. In 1980, I was the only candidate in the whole country belonging to the Congress (U) who was also supported by the Congress (I).

After Liberation, there were two opposite points of view on the status of Goa, Daman and Diu. In the first four Assembly elections, the Maharashtra Vidhan Sabha (MVP) obtained a significant victory and formed the Government. The MVP wanted the merger of Goa into Maharashtra on the grounds that Goa identified culturally and in many other ways with Maharashtra. The United Goans Party (UGP) as well as the Congress held that Goa should not merge with Maharashtra. The MVP wanted the matter to be decided by voting on the floor of the Assembly.

This was strongly opposed by the UGP and the Congress. Thereafter, during the premiership of Indira Gandhi an opinion poll (referendum) was held for Goa. This was the first and so far the only one ever held in the country. It went against the demand for the merger. Thereafter, the Congress and the UGP demanded statehood for Goa. My first speech in the Lok Sabha echoed that demand for statehood. However, Morarji Desai, then Prime Minister, was not in favour of small States. In 1980, Indira Gandhi returned as Prime Minister and I moved a Bill seeking statehood for

Goa. Rajiv Gandhi, then General Secretary of the Congress Party, met me and promised that statehood would be granted to Goa. True to his word, statehood was granted to us in the next term of the Lok Sabha during the premiership of Rajiv Gandhi himself.

It was obtained due to the efforts of then Chief Minister Pratapsingh Rane, my colleague in the Lok Sabha Shantaram Naik and other leaders of the Congress and the MVP's Pankar. The MVP brought a resolution demanding statehood for Goa. While replying to the debate, Shashikala Kakodkar then Chief Minister said, "In the early years after Liberation, the MVP stood for merger with Maharashtra and fought for it through the opinion poll in a democratic way. The verdict of the poll went against the merger. The MVP accepted the people's verdict because it believes in the wisdom of the electorate."

(The writer is a former Union Minister)

Gadkari confident India will get Corona vax as 'early as possible'

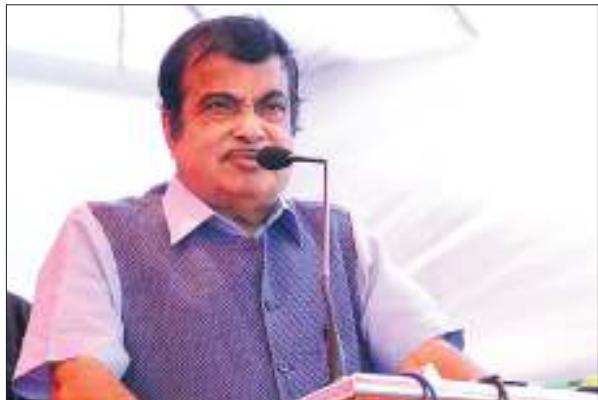
PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Monday expressed confidence that India will get a COVID-19 vaccine "as early as possible" and overcome the pandemic to win the economic war.

The Minister for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and Road Transport & Highways said that currently, "majority of countries are not interested to deal with China"; they are rather interested in India.

He said such a situation is advantageous for the country's manufacturing sector to ramp up its capabilities to boost exports from India.

"I am confident that we will get a vaccine as early as possible and 100 per cent we will win this war against COVID-19 and also win economic war," Gadkari said at a virtual event organised by Dun & Bradstreet. He said disbursement of loans to the tune of Rs 1.48 lakh crore has been completed so far, out of the Rs 3 lakh crore worth of collateral-free automatic loans for businesses announced by the Centre earlier. "We have already reduced our imports



The minister said emerging areas where MSMEs can work include artificial intelligence, robotics, sustainability, green manufacturing, waste to wealth, development of smart villages, e-mobility and virtual reality based solutions

and village industries stands at Rs 80,000 crore, he said the plan is to increase this to Rs 5 lakh crore in two years.

At a separate event, the minister said the whole world, including India, is facing the crisis of COVID-19 and the situation is challenging.

"We need to create positivity and self-confidence in the mind of the people. Negativity and suspicion will create more complication," Gadkari said this at the Virtual Horasis Asia Meeting 2020.

He also said that on the basis of the latest statistics, "we can say that we are coming to the normal situation".

At the same time in the manufacturing sector also, particularly trade and business, a lot of opportunities are up, he said. Gadkari said that as compared to China, India has got

from China and already our (India's) exports are increasing. The trends are positive and I am expecting good results in this field," said the minister.

He said the MSMEs are doing an excellent job despite facing an economic crisis.

Eligible borrowers for the scheme include MSME units, business enterprises, individual loans for business purposes and MUDRA borrowers.

Talking about schemes for the MSME sector, he said, "We have sanctioned some 93 schemes and more than 100 schemes are in the pipeline. We want to clear them as early as possible."

He said efforts are underway for reducing India's dependence on import of items such as crude oil.

The minister said emerging areas where MSMEs can work include artificial intelligence, robotics, sustainability, green manufacturing, waste to wealth, development of smart villages, e-mobility and virtual reality based solutions.

Gadkari said the MSME ministry is working on setting up a number of centers of excellence in collaboration with educational and research institutions like IITs and NIITs.

Pointing out that the current annual turnover of the khadi

Steel firms supply 56K tonne medical oxygen for Covid treatment: Ministry

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Steel companies have supplied 56,446.245 tonnes of medical oxygen from their integrated plants to various hospitals across the country till October-end, the Ministry of Steel has said.

To aid the supply of oxygen in the country, Union Minister of Steel Dharmendra Pradhan in September had directed steel plants to start supplying liquid medical oxygen (LMO), which is a crucial medical requirement for a coronavirus patient.

The steel ministry had also made operational a portal wherein plant-wise information regarding availability of oxygen and daily supply by various plants and states to which such supplies have been made is provided.

"Integrated steel plants (ISPs) in the public and private sector have been supplying LMO to meet the requirement of oxygen in hospitals across the country. 56,446.245 MT (metric tonne) LMO was supplied by steel plants to various states during the period from September 11, 2020 to October 31, 2020," the ministry said in an update.

5G connection to reach 350 mn in India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

5G connections across the globe are estimated to be 3.5 billion and India will account for 350 million subscriptions by 2026, according to a report by telecom company Ericsson.

India may get its first 5G connection in 2021 if spectrum auctions are held early next year, said Ericsson Head of Network Solutions (Southeast Asia, Oceania and India) Nitin Bansal.

Globally, more than 1 billion people, 15 per cent of the world's population, are expected to live in an area that has 5G coverage rolled out, according to the 'Ericsson Mobility Report 2020' released on Monday.

In 2026, 60 per cent of the



world's population will have access to 5G coverage, with 5G subscriptions forecast to reach 3.5 billion. In India, 5G subscriptions will surpass 350 million, accounting for 27 per cent of all mobile subscriptions in 2026," the report said.

Bansal said that based on the reported timeline for spec-

ified time spent by people online contribute to monthly usage growth in India. Accordingly, total traffic is projected to quadruple in India, reaching 35EB (exabyte) per month in 2026," Ericsson Mobility Report Editor and Head of Strategic Marketing Insights States Patrik Cervall said.

The report said LTE (4G) remains the dominant technology in India in 2020, accounting for 63 per cent of mobile subscriptions and 3G is expected to be phased out by 2026.

"In the India region, LTE subscriptions are forecast to increase from 710 million in 2020 to 820 million in 2026, increasing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 2 per cent," the report said.

On track to produce 177m auto-disable syringes by March: HMD

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Hindustan Syringes & Medical Devices (HMD) on Monday said it is on track to produce 177.6 million 0.5 ml KOJAK auto-disable syringes for the government by March 2021.

The company has also shipped over 100 million pieces of KOJAK AD syringes to Covax stockpile facility, as the Covid vaccines are showing promising results across the globe, HMD said in a statement. The WHO and UNICEF have recommended

Coronavirus forces small shops to adapt or close

PNS ■ LONDON

In late October, Matthew Jones was enjoying a rare "bit of normality" at his London barber shop in a year that has been short on that.

He was cutting hair and laughing with colleagues — when the news landed that the business would have to close for the second time.

Jones, 43, endured 15 weeks without any income after the three Sharpes barber shops he co-owns were forced to shut in the spring as the government imposed restrictions to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

The shops, including a tiny one in east London's trendy Hackney neighbourhood, had been open for four months when Prime Minister Boris Johnson ordered a new lockdown. "It was a body blow for everyone that works here," he said. "You're just building up your business again, trying to get back to a normal lifestyle. And then all of a sudden it's all taken away." As in much of Europe, the United Kingdom saw a sharp resurgence of

The shops had been open for four months when Prime Minister Boris Johnson ordered a new Covid lockdown

Route eyes 2 acquisitions; says due diligence on

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

COVID-19 infections this autumn, and officials imposed a second round of severe restrictions.

The suffering has been especially acute in the U.K., where more than 57,000 people have died in Europe's deadliest outbreak and the economy has plunged into the worst recession on record.

While small businesses all over the world are struggling as the virus forces many to close outright while also remaking consumer habits, many in the U.K. are facing the double whammy of the pandemic and the economic uncertainty caused by Britain's exit from the European Union.

Eight-fold AI raises \$125 m in latest funding round

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Talent intelligence platform Eightfold AI on Monday said it has raised USD 125 million in its latest funding round, valuing the Noida-based company at USD 1 billion.

The series D round was led

by General Catalyst, and existing investors such as Capital One Ventures, Foundation Capital, IVP and Lightspeed Venture Partners, the company said. So far, the AI-powered talent intelligence platform that uses a single solution to manage the entire talent lifecycle,

has raised more than USD 180 million. Eightfold has more than quadrupled its sales since the last round of equity funding in April 2019 and boasts of a customers base that include Tata Communications, AirAsia, Bayer, Capital One and Micron.

In 2019, the co-working operators had leased 8.1 million sq ft office space across six major cities -- Delhi-NCR, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Chennai and Pune.

In its report, Savills said it "expects 3.4 million sq ft of take-up by coworking players in 2020, recording an 11 per cent share of the total office leasing activity".

As per the data, leasing of office space by co-working

players in Bengaluru is estimated to fall at 1.1 million sq ft in 2020 from 2.3 million sq ft last year. In Hyderabad, it is likely to drop to 1.1 million sq ft this year from 2.1 million sq ft.

The Delhi-NCR market will

see co-working players leasing at 0.2 million sq ft in 2020 as against 1.5 million sq ft last year. Leasing of office space by co-working segment in Pune and Mumbai is estimated to drop to 0.4 million sq ft during this year. Pune witnessed 1 million sq ft and Mumbai 0.6 million sq ft absorption in 2019. In Chennai, 0.2 million sq ft is expected to be leased by co-working segment this year as against 0.6 million sq ft in 2019.

However, Savills India estimated the leasing activity by co-working operators to increase 42 per cent to reach 4.9 million sq ft in 2021 over 2020. The share of coworking space take-up in overall office leasing activity is poised to rebound to about 15 per cent

share in 2021, similar to the 2019 level.

In the year 2022, the number is expected to witness a further 25 per cent annual growth and register leasing activity of 6.1 million sq ft.

"Over the years, shared office space has emerged as a separate asset class, bringing significant cost-advantages to occupiers," Savills India MD, Research and Consulting, Arvind Nandan said. At a juncture when co-working spaces were seeing strong growth, the outbreak of COVID-19 has changed the rules with social distancing and de-densification of workspace becoming imperative, Naveen Nandani, Managing Director - Commercial Advisory & Transactions, Savills India said.

Office space leasing by co-working players to fall 58%

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



Penalty waived for non-compliance with QR code provisions for B2C

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government has waived the penalty for non-compliance with QR code provisions for B2C (business-to-consumer) invoices generated by businesses till March 31, 2021.

However, it would be mandatory for businesses to follow the QR code provisions from April 1, 2021 to avail this penalty waiver.

The requirement of printing dynamic QR code on B2C invoices is being implemented from December 1. Quick Response code or QR code helps users verify the details in digitally signed e-invoices.

Under the Goods and Services Tax (GST), companies with a turnover of over Rs 500 crore have to generate e-invoices for B2B (business-to-business) transactions from October 1. However, it is not mandatory for B2C transactions.

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), in a November 29 notification, said the penalty has been waived for non-compliance with QR code provisions for B2C transactions between the period from December 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021, subject to the condition that the said person complies with the provisions from April 1, 2021.

Commenting on the step, EY Tax Partner Abhishek Jain said, "The central government has provided the much required relaxation for the businesses by waiving the penalty for non-compliance with QR code requirement till March 2021 for B2C transactions."

"As many of the industry players were not ready, this waiver would give the requisite time for the industry to be ready for this compliance."

AMRG & Associates Partner Rajat Mohan said, "Government has waived the penalty for non-compliance to QR code provisions if they are complied by April 1, 2021, for default during the period of December 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021."

Under e-invoicing, taxpayers have to generate invoices on their internal systems (ERP/accounting/billing software) and then report it online to the 'Invoice Registration Portal' (IRP).

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'OTT IS COOLER WITH LESS LIMITATIONS'

Iqbal Khan, best known for his TV serials *Kaisa Yeh Pyaar Hai*, *Kahiin Toh Hoga*, among many others, was last seen in the web series *Crackdown*, and is currently shooting for an upcoming series. Khan, who started his career with music videos, talks to *The Pioneer's* K RAMYA SREE about his journey into the industry, filming for OTT content, why he refrains from talking about Kashmir, and more

He walked into showbiz with his music videos and stole the hearts of youngsters. Iqbal then worked in several television serials before he made his digital debut with the show *The Bull Of Dalal Street* earlier this year. But his acting journey started at a very young age at school. He says, "I used to be a part of various plays in school. Later, I started modeling in college, after which I moved to Mumbai to try my hand at acting. That's how my first music video happened followed by other good work."

Having maneuvered from films to Television to OTT, the actor feels working for the web is cooler with no limitations.

"Having worked in TV, films, and the web, I enjoy the web the most, there is absolute freedom. Television has a bit of limitation, just like films. The web is pretty cool that way."

That TV industry needs to up its game as far as content is concerned, is a discussion that has been going on for quite some time now. And the actor feels the same. He explains, "The problem with TV is that there are research teams in every channel. There is science and math involved. These research teams do their calculations before making the content. The emotional content has very little space. Now, TV audiences too are declining in number, with each passing day. Having said that, there are decent writers

too, who make good stuff."

Speaking about his role in *Crackdown*, he says, "My role in *Crackdown* is just not me. As an actor, I love working on characters which I have to work on wherever homework is required. The guy I play is very cool and the country's primary love. He is a bit of a womaniser, is harsh and abusive. Playing that character was pretty amazing and it was a nice change."

On being directed by Apurva, he says, "It was a bit emotional for me to have been directed by him. We were classmates and we would play cricket as kids. We both have come a long way. I look forward to working with him again, and the get-togethers he hosts, because it is a lot of fun to be around him."

Iqbal was at the receiving end and faced a lot of criticism and hatred online after he expressed his views on Kashmir being a Kashmiri himself. When asked what he feels about the current situation in J&K, he says, "I don't want to comment on this issue, because, whatever I speak now, it's going to become controversial. All I would say is I'll pray that the place is peaceful and very soon everything returns to normalcy and everybody will enjoy the place both visitors and settlers."

On being asked what's next, the actor concludes by asking his fans to follow him on his social media handles to get a hint about his future projects as he cannot reveal any of them because of the contracts he signs. So go follow him, now!

"MY ROLE IN CRACKDOWN IS JUST NOT ME. AS AN ACTOR, I LOVE WORKING ON CHARACTERS WHICH I HAVE TO WORK ON WHEREVER HOMEWORK IS REQUIRED. THE GUY I PLAY IS VERY COOL AND THE COUNTRY'S PRIMARY LOVE. HE IS A BIT OF A WOMANISER, IS HARSH AND ABUSIVE."

Ishaan gives dating tips to his fans



Bollywood actor Ishaan Khatter, who has millions of followers on social media, is known for his crazy female following, especially after his heart-melting performance in *Dhadak*. So it was only natural for him to give dating tips to his fans. The dashing young actor took to his Instagram page to share tips and tricks on how to make a meaningful profile on dating sites through a series of interactive stories.

When asked what dating advice he would like to give single Indians, Ishaan said, "I think honesty and communication is the key to any relationship. We shouldn't settle for something that doesn't let us be ourselves. I'm excited and happy. The importance of building meaningful connections has been realised strongly in 2020 and a dating app does such a creative job in bringing people together. Also, its approach of making women the first move reimagines the traditional gender role dictated by society and makes the app uniquely cool."

The pandemic must have changed how we communicate with each other but what hasn't changed is the need for making meaningful connections through dating

"HONESTY AND COMMUNICATION ARE KEY TO ANY RELATIONSHIP. WE SHOULDN'T SETTLE FOR ANYTHING THAT'S LESS."

To brew them right and well is also essential. It's very important to note that you should always use freshly drawn water. After it reaches boiling point (100 degrees C), allow it to rest for one minute. This will bring down the temperature to around 80 degrees C, which is an ideal temperature to brew these teas. Steep these teas for between three and five minutes.

Avoid adding milk. You can add honey, stevia or any other sweetener.

(The writer is a Founder of Vahdam Teas)



A CUP FULL OF IMMUNITY

Whether one is happy or sad, a cup of tea always comes in as your best partner. But today, tea can do much more than enhance your mood. BALA SARDA lists teas that boost immunity

Having a strong immune system is more important than ever. With the ongoing pandemic, while there is no proven cure as of now, enhancing the body's immunity plays a very crucial role in maintaining optimum health and keeping the disease at bay.

Here are five teas which can play a significant role in boosting and building your immunity the natural way.

Turmeric Tea

Turmeric known as the Golden Son of Ayurveda has been known as one of the healthiest spices of India due to its multiple medicinal and adaptogenic benefits. The Ministry of Ayush has recommended Turmeric for boosting immunity. Make sure you're drinking turmeric tea coupled with black pepper.

The main active ingredient in Turmeric, 'Curcumin' is responsible for its multiple life enhancing properties. Combining black pepper with turmeric is proven to increase curcumin's absorption in the body significantly.

Lemon Tea

There is nothing quite as healthy as a cup of lemon tea. Besides being packed with nutrients that can give your health a big boost, it is a great way to stay hydrated as well, and now with summers already here, this could be an elixir. Lemon tea is loaded with Vitamin C, which can act as a natural antioxidant in boosting the body's immunity.

Pure Green Tea

Well-known for being an abundant source of antioxidants, drinking green tea on a regular basis flushes out the toxins from the body. Abundant in polyphenols and catechins, green tea helps boost immunity. Green tea has long been recognised as having powerful antiviral properties and can go a long way to keep you healthy and well.

Moringa Tea

Moringa is just the superfood we need. The moringa leaves provide a significant amount of antioxidants. It is a treasure house of all essential nutrients including essential vitamins and minerals that are needed to improve the immunity. When consumed regularly, moringa can really strengthen your immunity.

Ashwagandha Tea

Ashwagandha is an adaptogenic herb, which helps our body to deal with daily stress and balances our body functioning. It also promotes overall immunity, strength, energy and endurance. It's been used to prepare Ayurvedic medicine for a long time. Ashwagandha is not limited to the immune system but offers a lot of other health benefits.

Pollution, pandemic and pre-term birth

Most pregnancies last 40 weeks; a baby is known as a premature or pre-term when her or she is born before the completion of 37 weeks. Based on the gestational age, pre-term babies are sub-categorised as extremely preterm (less than 28 weeks), very preterm (28 to 32 weeks), moderate to late preterm (32 to 37 weeks).

"Advances in the field of medicine have meant that more than 9 out of 10 premature babies survive, and most go on to develop normally," says Dr Archana Dhawan Bajaj, Gynaecologist and Obstetrician and IVF expert, Nurture IVF Centre. There are several reasons for preterm births, while most happen spontaneously some are due to early induction of labour or caesarean birth, whether for medical or non-medical reasons, she says. "Some of the common causes include multiple pregnancies, infections and chronic conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure; however, often no cause is identified."

Pollution and pre-term birth

Dr Bajaj explains risk of premature or preterm birth has been associated with exposure to air pollution during pregnancy by increasing toxic chemicals in the blood and causing immune system stress, which can weaken the placenta surrounding the fetus and lead to preterm birth. This, in turn, raises risk of health complications for the baby, both in the short and long term.

"As per estimates, more than 3 percent of all premature births in the US are attributable to air pollution. Furthermore, findings suggest that considerable health and eco-

nomic benefits can be gained through reductions in outdoor air pollution exposure during pregnancy. Several studies have found air pollution as one of the risk factors for preterm birth. Air pollution is associated with an unfavourable vaginal microbiota suggesting a relationship between environmental and biological risk factors that may further substantiate the risk of pre-mature birth in pregnant women. US Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Centre and the University of Cincinnati carried out studies and identified a 19 percent increased risk, with the greatest risk when exposed to air pollution during the third trimester of pregnancy."

Another study has found an association with exposure to high levels of small particulate matter with an increased risk of premature birth, she points out. One of the professors in the US said that the decreasing amount of particulate matter in the air below the US Environmental Protection Agency's standard threshold could decrease preterm birth in women exposed to high levels of small particulates by about 17 percent, which corresponds to a 2.22 percent decrease in the preterm birth rate in the population as a whole, Dr Bajaj says.

COVID and pre-term birth

COVID-19 has been spreading far and wide across the globe with devastating effects across majority of the population. While it's the aging population which is at a major risk of developing complications from the disease, pregnant women also have a reason to worry as they may face an elevated risk for delivering their babies prematurely, according to new studies from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Additionally, they may also be at greater risk of losing the



pregnancy or having a stillbirth, says the doctor.

While none of the data indicate that pregnant women are more susceptible to severe COVID-19 infection, nor have studies suggested an increased risk of miscarriage, congenital anomalies, or early pregnancy loss in pregnant patients, however, studies have described an increased risk of preterm birth.

Similar results have been found with another study conducted in Korea which further stresses the point that COVID-19 can be associated with premature birth and sometimes severe outcomes for mother and baby, including death.

Several other researchers in various parts of the globe have studied the effects of the novel coronavirus on pregnant women and its outcome on the new born. They share the same views of pregnant women experiencing a higher rate of preterm deliveries than expected and a British study noted a population-wide uptick in stillbirths during the pandemic.

Summary

Pregnancy is a time filled with joy and happiness for every woman and it is the responsibility of one and all to ensure a healthy outcome for pregnant women and their infants.

While there are several other reasons that can cause preterm births including air pollution and COVID-19 infection, proactive clinical management and dedicated support coupled with adequate safety measures must be adopted to help protect those who are pregnant and their newborns.



Tackle DANDRUFF issue

While we all look forward to winters — sitting in front of the fire, drinking tea and talking about everything under the sun; there are some annoying problems that crop up — dry skin and dandruff. There are many products available in the market but a few home remedies work just as well with long lasting effect.

If you have dry skin, one of the best remedies is to mix two parts glycerin, two parts rose water and one part lemon juice. Keep this in a bottle.

Apply on the skin. Avoid areas where there is a break in the skin. Leave it overnight. Wash with warm water the next morning. One can use this on the face too, the results are amazing.

For cracked heels mix beeswax and mustard oil by heating them together in equal parts. Pour it into a container. Let it cool. Apply over the cracked heels. Wear socks. Wash feet the next

morning. Repeat till you get smooth heels.

Dandruff is another winter problem that many face. Mix orange peel powder and coconut oil to make a mask. Apply this on the scalp. Leave it overnight or at least for an hour. Wash off with shampoo. Do this thrice a week till dandruff disappears.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU

			3	2		9		
8	9			7				
2	1				3	7		
5	9	6		4	1	8		
9	6				7	6		
1	7	6				8		
8	9						6	5
2	1							
5	9	6						

Yesterday's solution

3	8	2	4	9	5	1	6	7
4	6	7	3	1	2	5	9	8
5	1	9	8	7	6	2	4	3
8	7	6	9	5	3	4	2	1
9	4	1	6	2	8	3	7	5
2	3	5	7	4	1	9	8	6
6	5	4	2	3	7	8	1	9
7	2	3	1	8	9	6	5	4
1	9	8	5	6	4	7	3	2

ACROSS

- 1 Look at the stars through this
- 6 Naming words
- 7 Memorise
- 9 Awful to look at
- 10 Say again
- 12 A team game with sticks
- 14 Trip over
- 17 A short spell of very wild weather with wind and rain
- 18 Instructions for building houses
- 19 Played make-believe

DOWN

- 2 Of the same length
- 3 A compass direction

SOLUTION

A	W	A	T	C	H	I	N	G
H	E	E	A	E	F			
S	P	E	R	A	R			
A	R	D	E	I				
O	U	T	R	E				
R	R	B	H					
R	M	S	B	O	G			
G	E	T	R	E				
U	N	D	R	A				
S	A	I	L	S				
S	I	L	P	P				

GINGER MEGGS



- Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9) exactly once.
- The sum of all numbers in any row or column must equal 45.

Amrita Rao: Earlier talent was important, **now there's talent management**

Mahesh Babu-starred actress Amrita Rao says the concept of visibility for an actor has changed, courtesy social media and talent management firms, as compared to the time she made her debut in 2002.

"Before the era of social media and PR machinery that we are seeing these days, an actor's popularity and celebrity status was a byproduct of his or her talent. When I entered the industry as a teenager and appeared in films like *Athidi*, *Ishq Vishk*, *Masti*, and *Main Hoon Naa*, people noticed me because of my performance, although a film like *Main Hoon Naa* had superstars like Shah Rukh Khan and Sushmita Sen. These days, actors are becoming popular also because of their presence on social media. I think for an actor, being remembered for a character and film is more important," Amrita said.

She continued, "There is nothing wrong with becoming a popular celebrity on social media, just that there is a huge change that has happened. I entered the industry during the transition period. Earlier, it was an over-the-

moon feeling of a youngster!" she giggled.

Despite being appreciated by critics and others for her performance and even being called 'another native-face girl of Tollywood', the actress was not seen in any other film post that, because of her trials in Bollywood, leading to her losing up on opportunities here. The actress made headlines last year when she accused Tollywood of using actresses as nothing but glam dolls. She also claimed that she rejected several offers from Telugu filmmakers for the same reason.



KGF producers to come up with another big film



Hombale Films, the Kannada film production company that gave India several big-budget films, including the most famous *KGF - I* and is to wrap *KGF - Chapter 2* soon, has announced the production of another pan-India film that will go on floors next.

After the huge success of *KGF Chapter 1*, Hombale became a name to reckon with, especially when it has to do with big-budget films. Their upcoming film, which the production house says will have a superstar and super director combo, will be a film that will be made across many Indian languages, like *KGF*. Information about the title, cast and the crew is slated to be announced on December 2nd and fans can't wait for Wednesday noon!

Hombale Films is already working on two other mega projects — *Yuvaratna* (a Kannada movie with Puneeth Rajkumar), *KGF Chapter II*.



Star comedian as 'Corporator'

Comedian Seshu Shankar, better known by his stage name Shakalaka Shankar is to play the titular role in the upcoming film *Corporator*. Sameepa Movies and A and I Studios are jointly presenting the film that is being produced by A. Padmanabha Reddy and

co-produced by Dr SV Madhuri. Director of the film, Dr Sanjay confirmed that Shankar's performance will be the main attraction of *Corporator* and it will have a social message. The film also stars actors Sunita Pandey, Lavanya Sharma, and Kasturi opposite Shankar as the female leads.



tollywood

RRR wraps up massive action sequence

Director SS Rajamouli's magnum opus *RRR* happens to be the most awaited Indian film. The latest update is that it wrapped up a 50-day massive action sequence schedule. The entire sequence was said to have been canned in night mode.

"Goodbye winter nights!!! Wrapped up a major action sequence schedule after almost 50 days of night shoot... Andddd nowww..."

Gearing up for a new schedule in some exotic locations :) #RRRMovie. (sic)," tweeted the team on Monday.

Set against the pre-independence era, *RRR* is a fictitious story based on two legendary freedom fighters, Alluri Seetharamaraju and Komaram Bheem. Helmed on a massive budget of Rs 350 crore, the period-drama features an ensemble star cast like Ajay Devgn and Alia Bhatt in pivotal roles.

After the 50-day schedule, the team has now taken a very short break and will get back with their next schedule soon,

in some exotic locales. NTR and Ram Charan have already gone out of town for their break, according to reports, after completing their portions.

Bollywood actor Ajay Devgn is in Hyderabad for the shoot of *RRR*, while Alia Bhatt will join the team in December and Shruti Saran has already completed shooting for her part.

A few moments ago, the makers of *RRR* took to their official social handle and revealed that almost 70% shoot has been wrapped up. Terming 2019 as a phenomenal year, they mentioned that the names of

the antagonists and replacement for Daisy Edgar Jones will be unveiled on November 20.

Fans hope the updated release date of *RRR* will be announced once the shoot of the film concludes.



Sampoornesh to groove to Prem Rakshith's tunes

Any news about Burning star Sampoornesh Babu's latest film sends waves across Tollywood fans. Both of the actor's previous films *Hrudaya Kaleyam* and *Kobbarimatta* have been super hits and his next *Bazaar Rowdy* is being shot at record speed. This is the actor's first film post the lockdown and fans can't wait to get a glimpse of the sets.

The commercial film is being directed by Vasanthi Nageswar Rao, and being produced by Sandhi Reddy Srinivas Rao under KS Creations' banner.

Actress Mahi is paired opposite Sampoornesh. Apart from the film's content, what's sure to garner eyeballs are the dance sequences in the film, say members of the unit. Noted choreographer Prem Rakshith, who set trends with films like *Arya-2*, *100% Love*, *Bahubali 1,2*, *Ishq* and others, is to get the Burning star to dance to his tunes!

Speaking about the making of the film, director Vasanthi said, "Prem Rakshith has raised the bar of the films he worked

with, and he's done the same with us, we're grateful for him. The song is being shot with Sampoornesh Babu, Mahi and 20 other dancers at Ramoji Film City. We're short of shooting just the climax and two more songs, and then we're done."

The film's star cast includes Shivaji Shinde, Prudhvi, Shashi, Jeewa, Sameer, Naveena, Manichandana and Padmavati. The teaser, first look and other details will be revealed soon.



An unconventional, funny and relatable drama on aha

After giving the audience a festive bonanza this Diwali with five back-to-back successful releases, the Telugu OTT platform *Aha* is continuing the entertainment ride with yet another new release titled *Honeymoon*. The web series is an exclusive tale of humorous, relatable and an unconventional take on adventures of a couple after an arranged marriage.

The six long episodic series is exploring the journey after the tag line 'happily ever after' of a newly wedded couple as they discover some hidden facets and unravel the little secrets about each other.

Jointly produced by Sakkath Studio and Kannada superstar Dr Shivraj Kumar Niveditha Shivrajkumar under the banner of Shrimuthu Cini Service, *Honeymoon* brings to the light the expectations and stages of emotions in

a newly wedded couple's life, with loads of humour and emotions. Starring Kannada film industry sensations Nagabhushana and Sanjana Anand as the lead pair, it's going to unwind the magic of falling in love as they continue to deal with the ups and downs. Both the actors have perfectly slipped into their respective roles of Praveen and Tejaswi, and viewers are sure to see themselves as part of this web series, pushing real-life couples to go back to their honeymoon times!

The sensational Payal Rajput unveiled a post-release glimpse on her social media handle and called the show exciting and a fun watch. Every couple has their thing, some want to rappel down the waterfalls, others just want to snuggle up in a private igloo, but this unique couple ventures to the land of coconut trees and house-boats.

Essentially, Kerala becomes their oyster, and it will be fun to see what do they do next!



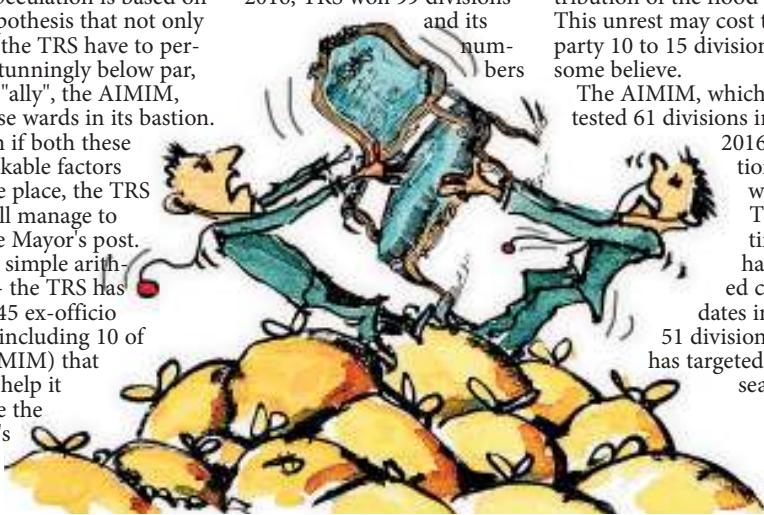
MAYOR'S POST

Despite BJP charge, TRS comfortably placed to win

RAJESH JAIN NIDARKAR
■ HYDERABAD

The BJP's high-voltage and aggressive campaign for the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation elections has resulted in the polls being discussed across the country and some quarters believe that the saffron party will pose a strong challenge to the hegemony of the TRS over the State's political spectrum. If this speculation is indeed true, and the BJP does manage to do the unthinkable and reduce the TRS strength to less than 40 wards, it still might not be able to deprive the pink party of the Mayor's post. This speculation is based on the hypothesis that not only would the TRS have to perform stunningly below par, but its 'ally', the AIMIM, also lose wards in its bastion.

Even if both these unthinkable factors do take place, the TRS will still manage to bag the Mayor's post. This is simple arithmetic - the TRS has about 45 ex-officio votes (including 10 of the AIMIM) that would help it capture the Mayor's chair.



While there are a total of 150 divisions in the GHMC, a party needs 76 seats to claim the Mayor's throne. However, ex-officio members also vote in the mayoral election. The TRS already has 35 ex officio votes. In addition to these, if it bags even 41 divisions, it would reach the magic figure of 76. The AIMIM has 10 ex-officio votes in the GHMC and if it supports the TRS, the number of ex-officio votes will reach 45.

Although the TRS looks set to win many more divisions than it requires to bag the Mayor's chair, it's widely speculated that the Mayor will be indirectly elected. In 2016, TRS won 99 divisions and its numbers

swelled to 102 with three corporators defecting to it. Members of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, Legislative Assembly and Council are registered as ex-officio members of the GHMC.

The TRS probably never expected the BJP to put up a fight, let alone an aggressive one, when it opted for the 'flash' elections. But the fact is that the BJP pulled all stops and pressed its biggest guns into service. This has led to speculations that the TRS may lose in some divisions, albeit by a narrow margin. Also, there is said to be an undercurrent of discontent with the AIMIM, caused by the haphazard distribution of the flood relief. This unrest may cost the party 10 to 15 divisions, some believe.

The AIMIM, which contested 61 divisions in the 2016 elections, won 44. This time, it has fielded candidates in just 51 divisions and has targeted 47 seats.

Battle for Hyd: Stage set for polling today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The stage is set for polling on Tuesday in the Hyderabad civic polls which witnessed a high decibel campaign resembling an Assembly or parliamentary election with top leaders from different parties participating in the electioneering.

As many as 74,44,260 voters would exercise their franchise using ballot papers to elect their representatives in the 150-ward Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), according to official data. The polling would begin at 7 AM and come to an end at 6 PM. The total number of contesting candidates is 1,122.

The Telangana State Election Commission (SEC) has made elaborate arrangements for the balloting process by deploying 48,000 (including reserve) polling personnel and 52,500 strong police force. The Commission had decided to conduct the election with ballot papers after obtaining the views of major political parties, Health department in view of COVID-19 and taking into consideration various relevant issues, it said earlier.

The SEC has conducted a campaign, featuring some



Principal Secretary Arvind Kumar along with other officials inspects poll preparations in GHMC limits on Monday

film personalities, to motivate the electorate to vote. Observing that all arrangements, including those in view of the COVID-19 pandemic, have been made for smooth polling, State Election Commissioner C Parathasarathi has appealed to the voters to exercise their franchise. The run-up to the polling witnessed a high decibel and often acrimonious campaign.

Buoyed by its victory in the recent bypoll to Dabbak, the SEC has conducted a campaign, featuring some

MoS (Home) G Kishan Reddy, who is Lok Sabha member from Secunderabad, party MP and BJYM national president Tejaswi Surya participated in the campaign.

The TDP highlighted the TRS' alliance with the AIMIM and sought votes to provide clean and transparent governance in the city.

The TRS, however, denied any alliance with the AIMIM.

The TRS' campaign was led by its Working President and state Municipal

Administration Minister K T Rama Rao, while party supremo and Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao addressed a public meeting.

The state's ruling party has deployed several state ministers and legislators for canvassing in the city. The Congress campaign was led

by its state president N Uttam Kumar Reddy and Working President A Revanth Reddy and other senior leaders. Once a major force in the state, but marginalised now, the TDP sought to revive its fortunes highlighting the development witnessed in the city, including in the IT sector, during N Chandrababu Naidu's regime as Chief Minister in undivided Andhra Pradesh.

The TRS and BJP leaders were engaged in a war of words attacking each other. BJP's Telangana president Bandi Sanjay Kumar found himself in a row following his comments that his party would conduct a 'surgical strike' in the old city here to send away Rohingyas and Pakistanis after it wins the post of Mayor in the polls.



TRS distributing Rs 5 cr in each division, alleges Cong

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Congress leaders on Monday alleged that the ruling TRS is distributing Rs 5 crore in each division. SEC Commissioner Partha Sarathi acts accordingly to TRS leaders' directives, they alleged. Speaking to the media, TPCC working president Ponnambalam Prabhakar and Dr Sravan Dasoji, AICC secretary Madhu Yashki Goud, urged the people to extend

their support to the Congress in GHMC elections. They asked the voters to recognise the development that took place during the Congress regime.

Dasoji Sravan alleged that the TRS leaders are distributing money in the GHMC elections that was earned in wrong ways. "TRS leaders and activists were caught red-handed while distributing money to the voters. The police and election commission

has become mute spectator. The election commission is working as a slave and deceiving the people for the sake of mere money," he alleged. Sravan opined that it is better to sell the corporator positions directly instead of conducting elections. "What are police officials doing when the TRS leaders are distributing money?" he questioned and said that the Congress activists are doing police duty.

Raja Singh demands action against Chaithanyaapuri CI

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BJP MLA T Raja Singh on Monday urged the officials concerned to conduct GHMC elections peacefully. He alleged that the TRS leaders are trying to lure the voters by distributing money. He said that they lodged a complaint with the ACP against the

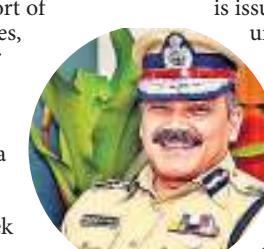
Chaithanyaapuri CI Ravi Kumar seeking action against him. Alleging that the SEC surrendered to the government, the BJP MLA said, "The Election Commission failed to obstruct the distribution of money by the TRS leaders. I request the voters to take money given by the TRS and vote for BJP."

Vivek files defamation suit against KCR, Hyd CP

Continued from Page 3

seeking from them unconditional apology and Rs 100 cr each as damages for filing baseless cases against his group of companies during the recent Dabbak bypoll "without conducting any sort of enquiry".

Vivek told media persons here on Monday that KCR had mounted pressure on Anjani Kumar to file the cases alleging that his companies were sending money to be used as inducements during the Dabbak by-elections. He sought to know from the police how they



could file cases without conducting any sort of inquiry. Besides, Anjani Kumar made several allegations against his companies at a press meet without any evidence, Vivek said.

Vivek issued a note stating: "Today I have issued a legal notice for defamation to the Chief Minister of Telangana and The Commissioner of Police, Hyderabad for illegally and allegedly filing a false criminal case on me without due process of law."

Liquor sales zoom, thanks to polls

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The liquor sales in GHMC limits have witnessed a sharp increase since the issuance of notification for the GHMC elections on November 17. The 12-day electioneering till November 29 has fetched huge revenues for the Excise Department through liquor sales. It's a common practice for candidates contesting from all major political parties to provide liquor to local party leaders and cadre during entire campaigning and to lure voters with liquor after campaigning ends ahead of polling.

As per the data available with the Excise Department, liquor sales worth Rs 135 crore were done on November 23, Rs 107 crore on November 24, Rs 102 crore on November 25, Rs 58 crore on November 26, Rs



170 crore on November 27, Rs 176 crore on November 28, Rs 108 crore on November 29.

Officials said liquor sales were increased by 40 per cent during GHMC polls over the sales done during the normal days. Last year, from November 1 to 29, the liquor

sales in GHMC limits were Rs 2,239 crore. However, the sales increased to Rs 2,567 crore during the same period this year, which is an increase of nearly Rs 500 crore. GHMC limits cover Hyderabad district besides parts of Ranga Reddy, Medchal and Medak districts. In Hyderabad district, liquor sales worth Rs 154 crore were done from November 17 to 29. Ranga Reddy district recorded sales worth Rs 317 crore, Medchal district Rs 42 crore and Medak district Rs 100 crore, totalling Rs 615 crore.

Mild tension on Necklace Road in Hyd

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Tension prevailed on Necklace Road after TRS activists stopped BJP state president Bandi Sanjay Kumar's convoy alleging that money is being transported to distribute to voters. According to the Ramgopal Police, TRS Khairatabad corporator Vijaya Reddy and her supporters stopped the car and checked it which led to skirmish between the 2 groups. Joint Commissioner of Police Central zone P Viswa Prasad said, "There is no attempt to murder on Bandi Sanjay. Please don't believe such rumours. An oral alteration between two political groups led to damage of glass of the car."

